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Weizman says he will now commute life terms

BATSHEVA TSUR

PRESIDENT Ezer Weizman yesterday announced his readiness to commute life sentences, saying he is convinced his proposals for legislative changes have been accepted in principle.

The president is to meet with Justice Minister David Liba'i next week to discuss the commutation of some one dozen sentences. Included is that of Yona Avnushmi, who was sentenced to life for the 1983 murder of Emil Grunzweig during a Peace Now demonstration outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem.

The president made his decision following consultations with Liba'i, who informed him of the progress made in preparing a draft law, in conjunction with Chief Justice Meir Shamgar. This would establish a special parole commission, headed by a judge, that would be empowered to discuss the regular commutation of life sentences.

Weizman's bureau stated last night that sentences to be commuted would not be shorter than 30 years. But the commission would be empowered to take off one-third of the period for good behavior, so the minimum period served would be 20 years. The first discussion by the commission could take place only after seven years, according to the proposal.

In exceptional cases, lifers would be able to apply for a presidential pardon after serving 15 years.

Until previous presidents began commuting life sentences, those sentenced for murder — which carries mandatory life imprisonment — remained in prison literally until their deaths. According to the law, commutation is made by the president on the recommendation of the Justice Ministry.

After assuming the presidency and studying the issue, Weizman concluded that it would be more fitting for a legal body to commute such sentences rather than the president, who was not familiar with all the details. In the past year and a half, therefore, there have been no commutations as Weizman discussed the matter with Liba'i and Shamgar.

At their meeting yesterday, Liba'i reported to Weizman that another legislative change was being prepared according to which, in certain cases, persons could be charged with manslaughter rather than murder.

Eisenberg buys control of ICL

CONTROL of Israel Chemicals was sold yesterday to interests owned by businessman Shaul Eisenberg.

The Israel Corporation and a non-Israeli company controlled by Eisenberg will jointly buy a 24.9 percent of ICL's outstanding shares for \$230.3 million.

Full story, Page 8

Police foil kidnapping of diamond heiress

One abductor killed, another still at large



Keren Gertler (right) is greeted by her mother Hanna after her ordeal. (Reuters)

RAINE MARCUS

THE kidnappings of a leading diamond dealer and his soldier daughter yesterday ended in a shootout with police, who traced the abductor's car phone and shot him dead in an ambush.

Keren Gertler, 18, was released unharmed by the man's female accomplice yesterday afternoon, after the latter lost phone contact with him and apparently panicked.

Diamond trader Asher Gertler escaped with only a minor injury in the shootout with his abductor.

Kidnapper Avi Sapan, 49, a former shooting champion, was killed in the gun battle with police, after he shot and wounded a policeman after being cornered in a Ramat

Aviv parking lot. Police were still searching for Sapan's female partner last night. Her description is known.

Police said the pair had planned to kidnap Keren, whose grandfather is former Diamond Exchange president Moshe Schmitzer, and to demand a ransom of \$2 million in cash and loose diamonds.

Police Inspector-General Asaf Hefetz praised the quick work of the police in preventing a tragedy.

"The kidnappers were stupid to think they could get away with such an act," Hefetz said last night at Tel Aviv police headquarters.

The drama began yesterday morning when Keren Gertler was abducted at gunpoint by Sapan and his partner as she left her

(Continued on Page 2)



Police examine Asher Gertler's car. (Hanoch Grizinski/Israel Sun)

Keren Gertler: I was scared stiff

RAINE MARCUS

KEREN Gertler described her ordeal last night, saying she had been frightened out of her wits.

"As I was leaving for my army base yesterday morning, a woman dressed in soldier's uniform knocked on my car window and asked me for directions to the Kirya," Gertler said.

The male kidnapper, Avi Sapan, then threatened Keren with a gun and forced her into the back seat of the car. The two abductors then drove her to a ground-floor apartment in Magdiel, where they photographed and drugged her.

"I fell asleep for a while," said Keren, "and when I woke up there was just a woman in the room. I was blindfolded and my kidnapper tried to convince me she was a man."

The woman kept telling Keren that nothing

bad would happen to her as long as the police did not get involved.

Keren kept in contact with her mother using her cellular phone. "At times the woman tried to be nice to me, and I attempted to conduct a regular conversation, but I was scared stiff."

When the woman kidnapper failed to make contact with her partner, she apparently panicked and decided to release Keren unharmed.

"She took me blindfolded onto the street and told me to run," Keren said. "She instructed me to remove the blindfold, but warned me not to turn around. She said something bad would happen to me if I looked behind."

Keren then hitched a ride with a passing motorist and contacted her mother Hanna.

Hanna Gertler said her most difficult moment was when Sapan hung up the phone on her, after threatening to kill both her daughter and husband.

"I am no sucker," Gertler said he told her. "You called the police, and now I want \$5 million instead of \$2 million."

Hanna Gertler then described how she spoke several times to Sapan. "During one conversation, he told me he had AIDS, and had only three years left to live, and thus had nothing to lose."

"He sounded desperate," she said. "I tried to reassure him that we were preparing the ransom. I just wanted him to promise my husband's and daughter's safety."

Tough talks expected with EU delegation

DAVID MAKOVSKY

TENSION is expected to be high at meetings tonight and tomorrow between Israelis and a visiting senior European Union (EU) delegation, due to disagreement over a wide range of issues, including a proposed trade agreement and the future of the peace process.

The delegation is led by France's Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, whose country holds the rotating leadership of the EU, and the vice-president of Brussels-based EU Commission, Emmanuel Martin. They will be accompanied by senior officials from Spain and Germany.

Both Israel and the EU have major complaints against each other, senior diplomatic sources in Jerusalem told reporters yesterday.

Israeli officials have made it clear the issue that concerns it most is the terms of the proposed EU-Israel free-trade agreement. Both Industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish and Agriculture Minister Ya'acov Tsur said the terms are so poor they cannot support it.

Both Harish and Tsur have charged the Europeans are not demonstrating sufficient goodwill in these negotiations, even though Israel is taking risks for peace with its Arab neighbors. Due to the criticism, the delegation has scheduled a special meeting with Harish and Tsur tonight, Foreign Ministry officials say.

The criticism has special urgency, since the current negotiations mark the first time the EU is willing to discuss the parameters of trade with Israel in 20 years. The prevailing agreement, once considered the best free-trade agreement outside the European Common Market, has been surpassed by EU agreements with Nordic and eastern European countries, and to some extent, North African countries as well.

Many senior officials agree that the proposed agreement will not make a dent in the \$7.4 billion trade deficit that Israel has with the EU, Israel's largest trading

Orient House meeting 'no big deal'

THE police apparently will not interfere in the upcoming Orient House meeting between Palestinian leaders and visiting European Union foreign ministers, despite calls by government leaders for the meeting to be held in Gaza.

As of last night, Jerusalem police had received no orders to prevent the meeting. Police Ministry sources said no such orders would likely be given.

"The general feeling now is that we don't want to make a big deal out of the meeting," a Police Ministry official said.

David Makovsky and Bill Humm

partner. This deficit has shot up by \$1.8 billion in the last year alone.

(Continued on Page 2)

Pay organization tax or forgo COL increase — Peretz

MICHAEL YUDELMAN and EVELYN GORDON

HUNDREDS of thousands of non-Histadrut workers may not receive the cost-of-living increase and other benefits in their February pay slips if the government does not extend the organization's tax agreement to non-Histadrut members, Histadrut Trade Union Section Chairman MK Amir Peretz said yesterday.

Histadrut Chairman Haim Ramon, Peretz and other leaders met Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair yesterday, and said it was not acceptable to extend some wage agreements, such as the COL raise, to the entire economy, while refusing to extend others, like the organization fees.

Ben-Yair has advised Labor and Social Affairs Minister Ora Namir not to extend the organization fees agreement, signed between the Histadrut and the public sector, to other workers who are not Histadrut members.

The Histadrut intends to petition the High Court of Justice

against the interim injunction it issued yesterday, which bans employers from deducting organization fees from wages of workers who are not Histadrut members.

MKS reacted angrily yesterday to the Histadrut's threat that if it is not allowed to collect dues from non-members, it will try to limit the cost-of-living increase to Histadrut members only.

"The COL increase and its application [to all workers] via extension orders is an accepted and essential element of labor relations in Israel," said Labor and Social Affairs Committee chairman Yossi Katz (Labor).

Katz met with Ben-Yair yesterday, and said the attorney-general had confirmed that he saw no legal barrier to giving the COL to all workers via extension orders, even though he thought it would be illegal to collect union dues from all workers via such orders.

Court considers legality of organization tax, Page 12

Snow hits the North, storms sweep country

DAVID RUDGE

SNOW blanketed parts of the Golan Heights and hilly regions of the Galilee yesterday including Safed and Mt. Meron, cutting off some communities, while storms swept the rest of the country.

Two snow plows and their crews were put on standby last night in Jerusalem in case winter weather hit the capital during the night.

The city spokesman called on residents to listen to the radio this morning, if there is snow, to find out if schools are open.

He also called on residents to use public transport and not their private cars in the event of bad weather.

Electricity cuts were reported in various parts of the country yesterday as a result of the stormy weather, although most were rectified within two hours.

The rain and heavy winds caused chaos on many roads, especially in the north and police reported a spate of accidents primarily as a result of motorists failing to drive in accordance with conditions.

Parts of the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway, as well as the parallel Haifa-Hadera route, were blocked for lengthy periods during the course of the morning as a result of accidents.

Police said the accidents had been caused by vehicles skidding in the slippery conditions on the roads. They strongly advised motorists to keep a safe distance and drive slowly, especially in view of strong side winds, gusting up to 60 kilometers per hour, along the coastal road.

Accidents were also reported in the Haifa bay-side district where heavy rain and hail fell throughout most of yesterday, as well as in the Galilee, causing traffic hold-ups.

Arkia yesterday canceled three flights to the north because of the stormy weather.

(Continued on Page 2)

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'Arafat would win landslide if PA elections held now'

IF Palestinian elections were held in the territories today, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat would easily win. This is one of the assessments the head of military intelligence, Maj.-Gen. Uri Saguy, reportedly gave the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday.

Saguy, however, said that Arafat continues to demand linking the Palestinian Authority with IDF withdrawal from the Arab population centers. This is because he fears that if the IDF is still deployed in the towns during the polling, his opponents would subsequently accuse him of win-

LIAT COLLINS

ning only because of Israeli manipulation and aid.

Saguy also said that since the Cairo summit, there has been a significant effort by the Palestinian Authority to act against Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in the autonomous areas.

Regarding the Jewish settlements, Saguy reportedly said that the Palestinian Authority is informed by its own sources within six to 12 hours of every construction move. Every house and every tractor in the settlements is monitored and the Palestinians

use the information in negotiating with Israel, Saguy said.

On Syria, Saguy repeated previous assessments that Assad would not accept anything but total withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

"Anyone who thinks Assad is willing to accept anything less than every last centimeter is deluding himself," Saguy said, adding however that Syria is preparing itself simultaneously for the options of negotiations or war.

Assad is not acting either against the Hizbullah in Lebanon or the rejectionist fronts operating from Syria, Saguy said.

Shahal: Palestinians are not fit to be our neighbors

BILL HUTMAN, BATSEVA TSUR and Irit

POLICE Minister Moshe Shahal yesterday blasted the Palestinian Authority as "not fit to be Israel's neighbors" and Palestinians for "not valuing human life like the other peoples of the world."

Speaking at the inauguration of a police station in Gush Katif, Shahal also said he remains firm in his belief that separation is essential between Palestinians and Israelis.

In Ashkelon meanwhile, Yevgeny Gromov, the security guard killed in a Gaza terrorist ambush on Monday, was buried in pouring rain.

Gromov, 32, was killed near Nahal Oz when gunmen opened fire on his car as it was escorting a gasoline truck to a filling station. A second guard was wounded.

His widow, Galina, said last night she was very moved by the large number of people who came to the funeral and later to the house. The Gromovs moved to Ashkelon with their nine-year-old son after making aliya from the CIS in 1993.

Yevgeny, a ballistics expert and a Red Army veteran, took a job as a security guard after not finding work in his field. Galina said he chose the risky work since it brought in more pay than other jobs.

Gromov is also survived by a sister who lives in Ashkelon and two brothers and parents in the CIS. Energy Minister Gonen Segov said in response to Monday's attack that he would propose changing the gasoline delivery system. From now on, Israeli tankers would travel as far as a new fuel depot to be established at the Erez checkpoint, where they would transfer their loads to tankers operated by the Palestinian Authority.

Gonen said three other fuel depots are planned for Judea and Samaria: one near Hebron, one near the Allenby Bridge, and the third near Jenin.

Shahal said he recommends that if the closure is partially lifted, Palestinians not be allowed to enter Israel in private vehicles, but only in buses and taxis, so security forces can control their movement more easily.

Until Israel sees improvement on the part of the

Palestinians, the country "must be ready with guns in arms ... and not accept them within us," Shahal said.

Later in the day, Shahal convened the committee he heads on separation between Israel and the Palestinians for its second meeting this week. The committee, which includes officials from all branches of the security forces, is expected to make recommendations early next month.

Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat said yesterday that he would accept the idea of separating Israelis and Palestinians, but it must be a political division and not just a step to enhance Israel's security.

In an interview printed in the early Wednesday edition of Egypt's Al-Ahram, Arafat said, "If there is a political separation, meaning a Palestinian independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, then we are ready to endure anything to secure this goal."

In Jericho, meanwhile, Labor Party secretary-general Nissim Zivli said yesterday the government should make "political concessions to the Palestinians beyond what was agreed in the Oslo Accords, so that Arafat could present some achievements to his people."

This could include evacuating settlements from the Gaza Strip even in the interim stage, he said. Other concessions could include giving the PA more powers and freeing Palestinian prisoners. Zivli said.

In Cairo yesterday, Israeli-Palestinian talks on elections for Gaza and the territories resumed after a four-week break, a further sign that the worst of a crisis in the peace process might be over.

The two delegations met at a Cairo hotel for negotiations expected to focus on drafting an agreement on arrangements for the elections, already six months behind schedule. The delegation heads - Saeb Erekat for the Palestinians and Yoel Singer for Israel - met alone earlier in the day.

"We had a lengthy, good discussion, and we will continue to discuss throughout these two days. We have covered a number of issues," Singer said.

lice, he said.

"We then decided to close in on him," said Last. The kidnapper realized that he was not going to get his money.

On Ramat Aviv's Rehov Brodsky's car containing Gertler and Sapan entered a dead end and the vehicle came to a halt.

Sapan ordered Gertler into the back seat, where he pushed his loaded pistol against his temple and threatened to blow his brains out.

As Sapan took out a length of rope to bind his victim's hands, Gertler - a former professional soccer player - butted him with his head and escaped from the car.

At the same time, detectives pounced. Sapan opened fire, lightly wounding Gertler in his legs and Chief Insp. Yossi Skappa in his shoulder. Two detectives fired at Sapan, killing him.

Police later found Keren Gertler's car abandoned near the family home. The car contained two pistols - one with a silencer - fragmentation and smoke grenades, and a dummy bomb.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Police Minister Moshe Shahal also commended the police's quick action, saying this would deter would-be kidnappers in the future.

TOUGH

(Continued from Page 1)

Just a decade ago, Israel's exports to Europe were worth about two-thirds the value of its imports. Last year, the exports were worth under 40% of the imports' value.

In contrast, Israel's exports to the US are worth 79% of the worth of imports, and its exports to Japan are 92% of what it imports.

"Israeli exports have proven that they can compete in developed economies, so Europe cannot claim we have some sort of structural problems," said Dr. Zvi Tene, Foreign Ministry director of economic affairs.

The EU's trade surplus with Israel dwarfs its links with 11 other non-European Mediterranean countries. In 1994, the European surplus with Israel was equal to the entire trade surplus it had with these 11 other countries put together.



US Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown (center) meets with his counterparts (clockwise), Micha Harish, Jordan's Ali Aburagheb, Egypt's Mohammed Mahmoud Mohammed and the Palestinians' Nabil Shaath in Taba yesterday. (AP)

Shaath: Closure must end before we can discuss economic cooperation

JOSE ROSENFELD and JON IMMANUEL

POLITICAL events overtook the economic agenda at yesterday's opening of the meeting of the region's trade ministers at Taba, as the Palestinians demanded that Israel first end the closure before talking about economic cooperation.

At a session on boosting economic cooperation and investment held with US Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown, Industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish, and Palestinian Authority Planning Minister Nabil Shaath, the conversation focused exclusively on the closure.

As long as closure is in effect, there can be no talk of economic cooperation, Shaath said.

The delegations, including groups led by the trade ministers of Jordan and Egypt, last night held bilateral meetings in round-robin fashion to try working out a multilateral agenda for promoting trade and investment. The delegations are to meet together today.

Harish said that recently there has been concrete progress in trade talks with Jordan, and he expects an agreement to be concluded within two weeks.

The Jordanians, on their part, are trying to arrange trade negotiations with Israel that include the Palestinians, to ensure the trade agreement it concludes with Israel will be consistent with Jordan's future agreement with the Palestinians. Harish said Israel would support including the Palestinians in these talks.

To encourage regional economic cooperation, the US is proposing to grant Jordan and the Palestinians preferential trade treatment under the General Systems of Preference (GSP),

ing trade and investment. The delegations are to meet together today.

Harish said that recently there has been concrete progress in trade talks with Jordan, and he expects an agreement to be concluded within two weeks.

The Jordanians, on their part, are trying to arrange trade negotiations with Israel that include the Palestinians, to ensure the trade agreement it concludes with Israel will be consistent with Jordan's future agreement with the Palestinians. Harish said Israel would support including the Palestinians in these talks.

To encourage regional economic cooperation, the US is proposing to grant Jordan and the Palestinians preferential trade treatment under the General Systems of Preference (GSP),

a status given to developing nations.

Earlier yesterday, Brown met with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat at Gaza's Shawa Cultural Center and co-hosted a roundtable for US and Palestinian businessmen.

Brown stressed that trade, investment, and private sector development depend on mutual security for Israelis and Palestinians.

"I must say I was heartened by the fact that, without initiation from me, Chairman Arafat committed himself to the eradication of violence and terrorism," Brown told a press conference after the meeting with Arafat. "It is so important to have that kind of personal commitment."

Arafat broke into Brown's statement to say "it will continue," but did not repeat his private statement to the press.

Builders for Peace, an organization of Arab and Jewish American business leaders, announced the establishment of a concrete plant and a hotel in Gaza.

The Gaza roundtable followed one in Ramallah the previous evening.

Assuring Palestinians a reasonable level of employment is in Israel's interest, Finance Minister Avraham Shohat said yesterday. This is despite the fact that Israel wants the smallest possible number of Palestinians to cross the Green Line.

Shohat was speaking at the first meeting of the team dealing with the economic aspects of separation from the Palestinians.

He said the country's dependence on Palestinian workers has lessened significantly, because some 50,000 foreign workers have been imported.

PA Police confirms arrest of suicide attacker

Dozens of DFLP members arrested in Gaza

JON IMMANUEL

PALESTINIAN Police sources in Gaza yesterday verified a report that an 18-year-old schoolboy arrested two weeks ago had planned a Ramadan suicide operation against Israel and had already videotaped a farewell speech to his family.

A Palestinian intelligence service investigation revealed that the Gaza youth had been coached by three masked Hamas men in a mosque three times a day after being selected last month for a suicide operation, said the weekly *Hayat al-Jadida*, edited by Nabil Amr, a former Fatah envoy in Moscow.

The youth, a former Fatah activist, had come from a Fatah family and Hamas had promised him that his family would receive more than 1,000 Jordanian dinars. He was released by police six days after his arrest when he promised not to go ahead with the plan.

Yesterday, the Palestinian Police said it arrested from 60 to 70 members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, after the DFLP took responsibility for the fatal attack against Israeli security guards in Gaza Monday.

The attackers ambushed the guards of a gasoline truck delivering supplies to Gaza, killing Yevgeny Gromov and wounding Yehonatan Ben-Shabat. Responsibility was claimed in a phone call to AFP in Gaza which the DFLP has not officially denied.

The DFLP, which has little more than three percent support in Gaza, issued a leaflet yesterday condemning the arrests and accusing the police of serving Israeli interests.

Adnan Hamad, a DFLP leader in Gaza, said "we are political and we have no connection with the military wing." The Marxist group is headed by Nayef Hawatmeh in Damascus.

Muhammad Jadallah, a spokesman for the DFLP in Jerusalem, said responsibility for the attack "lies with the Israeli occupation and the Palestinian Authority. Armed Israelis should not enter Gaza when there is no real peace."

Most of those arrested were considered frontmen for the organization. Arrests were conducted at the DFLP offices in Gaza and Jabalya.

Nobody arrested in previous roundups has ever been tried.

In the Hebron area, security forces arrested 17 students from the Hebron University on Monday night including six of the nine members of the Hamas-dominated student council, local sources said.

Shaath: Israel must agree to return of Palestinians to Galilee

DOUGLAS DAVIS

LONDON

SENIOR Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath has raised the prospect of refugees who left in 1948 returning to settle in the Galilee.

"If you return 100,000 Palestinians to Galilee, that's only 10 percent of the Palestinians in Israel already," he told the London daily *Independent*.

"Will the Israelis have to go along with that? I think they will have to."

Shaath also spoke in apocalyptic terms about a possible breakdown of the peace

SNOW

(Continued from Page 1)

There was flooding on several roads in the north and one family had to be evacuated from their Kiryat Ata home early yesterday after the drainage system overflowed.

In the far north, the problem was related more to snow, rather than rain. Several villages on the Golan Heights, including all the Druze villages, were blanketed.

Beit Jaan local council head Yusef Kabalan said emergency crews were working to keep the access road and the main route through the village open.

"It's a bit more difficult inside the village on the side streets, but

we have everything prepared, including an ambulance with snow chains in case it is needed," said Kabalan.

Meanwhile, the heavy precipitation in the past few days has raised the level of the water in Lake Kinneret to within 80 centimeters of the maximum mark.

Mekorot officials said it was likely that the Deganya sluice gates at the southern outlet of the lake would be opened by the beginning of next week in order to regulate the water level and prevent the Kinneret from overflowing.

Bill Hutman contributed to this report.

Peres attacks Netanyahu over Golan peacekeepers

HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON

FOREIGN Minister Shimon Peres lashed out yesterday at Likud head Benjamin Netanyahu, saying it was "hutzpa" for the latter to be here lobbying now against a possible US troop presence on the Golan Heights.

Speaking to Israeli journalists during a break in his meetings with leaders of both houses of Congress, Peres asserted that yesterday one of his counterparts, whom he would not name, said: "I have to say, I don't remember a time during an official visit by the government, that in the Congress, an opposition figure arranges meetings for himself."

He insisted that Israel had never demanded the US troops be stationed on the Golan Heights, and that "it's quite strange, if not hutzpa, to present demands that we haven't made."

Peres added he didn't think that "a conflict in the Knesset had to be duplicated in the House of Representatives."

The attacks came on a day that

saw Peres meeting with the leading legislators on Capitol Hill, including House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole and the heads of the two Foreign Relations committees, Rep. Benjamin Gilman and Sen. Jesse Helms.

The previous day, Netanyahu met with Gingrich, and yesterday he met with Gilman and four senators of both parties.

Last night, Netanyahu responded to Peres' attack by saying, "The hutzpa of Peres who thinks that he can shut the mouths of half the nation in Israel and the Diaspora."

Peres also predicted that as long as the PLO cracks down on terrorism, it can preserve its dialogue with the US and continue receiving US assistance. Both are made possible through congressional waivers that must be renewed every six months.

"If they do the right things, it'll pass. If they don't do them, it won't," he said of the PLO.

SOCIAL & PERSONAL

The weekly meeting of the English-speaking Jerusalem Rotary Club will take place today at 1 p.m. at the YMCA, King David Street. Dr. Milton Gordon will speak on Fear of Electro-Magnetic Radiation Fields - Justified or Not.



With deep sorrow and grief, we mourn the passing of our great teacher and mentor

Hagaon Harav CHAIM YAAKOV GOLDBICHT זצ"ל

Rosh Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh for 40 years who passed away in Jerusalem on Tuesday, February 7, 1995 (7 Adar Alef).

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הכרזת מלחמה

Hospitals must wait for birth payments

DUE to time lags caused by the introduction of the national health insurance system, no hospital has been paid since the end of December for the delivery and care of newborns, and money will not be received from the health funds until early next month.

Under the old system, the National Insurance Institute (NII) paid hospitals once a week after receiving a list of the names of mothers who gave birth; larger compensation was due for the care of premature infants, which is very expensive.

But under the new system, obstetrical care is included in

the basket of health services that each insurer is required to supply members. Thus, the NII must transfer NIS 3,685 per delivery of a full-term baby and NIS 33,304 per premature infant (who may be hospitalized for weeks or months) to the health funds; they, in turn, then transfer this money to the hospitals.

Since an average of 9,200 births occur each month, payments for only full-term babies born in January total some NIS 33 million; adding the nearly 5 percent of babies who are premature makes the total the

insurers owe the hospitals considerably higher.

Under the new law, employers must send the first monthly payment of health taxes to the NII on February 15. The NII is required to transfer this money to the health funds by the end of February, and they send the money to the banks in the beginning of March. The delay has put smaller hospitals with serious cash-flow problems - which are unable to lay out expenses until they receive their first payment from the health funds -

under severe financial pressure.

Danny Marinov, a NII deputy director-general, told *The Jerusalem Post* the health funds are bound to pay the hospitals whether or not they have received NII disbursements from health taxes. "Because of the new law, there is a time gap for payment, but this will not occur in the future, as the insurers' payments will flow regularly."

No comment was available from either the NII or the Health Ministry on why the NII was not required by law to make advance payments to the health funds so the hospitals would not

have to wait over two months for their money.

The Health Ministry has proposed restoring the old system, in which deliveries are not part of the health services basket, but paid for directly by the NII. But this would require an amendment to the National Health Insurance Law, and the Knesset Labor and Social Affairs Committee has not yet received any concrete proposal. The NII has a position on the issue, but will not reveal it until it learns the view of Labor and Social Affairs Minister Ora Naimir, Marinov said.

Chief rabbi lets 24 undivorced men remarry

HERB KEINON

OVER the last two years, Chief Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron has allowed 24 men to take a second wife, in cases where they were unable to deliver a writ of divorce (get) to their first wives.

The cases were documented in a letter Bakshi-Doron wrote to the Prime Minister's Office, following a query on the matter by Meretz MK Dedi Zucker. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is acting religious affairs minister.

In 14 cases, the first wife was mentally disturbed and unable to grasp the significance of the divorce, said Rabbi Rafi Dayan, an aide to Bakshi-Doron. In the other cases the women either went abroad and could not be tracked down to be given the get, or they had committed adultery and refused to accept the get.

Under Jewish law, a married woman or her representative must accept the get in order for it to be valid.

This is not the first time the issue of second wives has been raised. In 1992, then religious affairs minister Avner Shalei, responding to a move by a number of MKs who wanted to ban the practice, said that permission to take a second wife is given on an average of 13 times a year.

Shalei told the government at the time that this permission is granted only if the woman is mentally incompetent and cannot receive or appoint a representative to receive the get; if she has disappeared for five years; or if she has proven to be infertile for 10 years - halachic grounds for divorce - but refuses to accept the get.

Dayan said that none of the cases Bakshi-Doron has dealt with had to do with infertility.

According to the Bible, men are permitted to have more than one wife, but women are forbidden from taking more than one husband.

In the 10th century, however, the German halachic scholar Rabbi Gershom Ben Yehuda (known as Rabbeinu Gershom) banned multiple wives. He provided one loophole - that in extreme cases a man could take another wife if he received the signature of 100 rabbis. The ban on multiple wives has been accepted by Ashkenazi communities for a millennia, and is now accepted by Sephardi communities as well.

Founder of hesder program, Rabbi Haim Goldvicht, dies at 69

RABBI Haim Ya'akov Goldvicht, dean of Yeshivat Kerem Beyavne for 40 years and founder of the hesder yeshiva program, died in Jerusalem yesterday. He was 69.

Born in Jerusalem, Goldvicht was educated at the Eitz Haim Yeshiva in Jerusalem. After his marriage he moved to Bnei Brak and studied under the leading halachic authority of the time, Rabbi Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz (the Hazon Ish).

In 1954 Goldvicht established Yeshivat Kerem Beyavne at Kibbutz Yavne, and served as its head ever since.

Goldvicht also conceived and implemented the hesder yeshiva program, in which students integrate Torah study with service in the IDF, with Kerem Beyavne setting up the first such program some 30 years ago. Today there are 15 hesder yeshivot, with another five scheduled to open next year. A number of the heads of those yeshivot were Goldvicht's students.

In recognition of his role in establishing the hesder yeshivot, Goldvicht received the Israel Prize in 1991 on behalf of the entire hesder movement.

Goldvicht is survived by a wife and two children.

Argentinian Deputy Foreign Minister Fernando Petrella (right) arrives yesterday for a working meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin (left). Petrella said his government is still investigating last year's bombing of the Buenos Aires Jewish community center and believes local residents were involved. In response to Petrella's promotion of a UN civilian humanitarian force, Beilin suggested Gaza as an ideal trial location. (Text: David Makovsky; photo: Eitan Herman)

Israel Festival may sue to recover cost of budget-cut cancellations

HELEN KAYE

THE Israel Festival will be faced with NIS 4 million in contract penalties if the NIS 1.3 million budget cut imposed last week by the Ministry of Science, Communication, and the Arts goes through, general manager Yossi Talgan said yesterday.

Hinting that a large part of the festival might have to be canceled unless the cuts are restored, Talgan said they represent "an unprecedented slighting of Jerusalem, which has hosted and contributed toward the festival since 1982. Cancellations may be misinterpreted abroad as resulting from political or security considerations."

Following an emergency meeting yesterday with Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, the festival management announced it would demand the ministry rescind its cuts.

"If we fail them, and with the utmost reluctance, we will be forced to seek legal redress," Talgan said, adding that the festival would petition the High Court and also seek civil damages of NIS 4m.

The NIS 1.3m. is part of a NIS 10.75m. cutback Arts Minister Shulamit Aloni decided to order among the festival, the New Israel Opera, and the Haifa Children's Theater Festival.

In a related development, Zalman Shoval, chairman of the New Israeli Opera (NIO) board of governors, said that if appeals to Aloni and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin fail, the NIO would also consider legal action.

"The opera is a thriving institution, but a budget cut of this size may force us to close. We have long-term commitments to 1997 and 1998, but we will not make contracts unless we have the money. We have a signed contract with the Arts Authority for its NIS 9m. subsidy and it is unthinkable this will not be honored."

In response, Arts Authority head Yossi Frost defended the cuts, saying "It's a shame to bother the courts. Under the circumstances this was the smartest move to make. Minister Aloni consulted with many public figures before announcing the cuts. The cities affected are powerful and have access to more funds than some poor little library on the periphery that is barely hanging on."

Knesset committee: Gov't should cover Laniado Hospital debt

JUDY SIEGEL

THE Finance Ministry must cover NIS 16 million in debts accumulated by Netanyahu's Laniado Hospital, a special Knesset committee decided on Monday.

The committee was established in November to investigate the hospital's financial troubles. A joint body comprised of MKs from the Finance and Labor and Social Affairs committees, the committee also recommended that the Netanyahu Municipality restore its previous level of subsidy - NIS 6 million per year.

Hospital administrative director Gershon Lieder said yesterday that if the committee's conclusions are carried out, Laniado will not have to turn into a private hospital and close its emergency room.

The 170-bed hospital, which

serves a population of 300,000 residents in the Sharon region, is owned neither by the government nor by Kupat Holim Clalit, but was established in 1976 by a voluntary organization at the initiative of the Sanz Rebbe. As a result of 50 percent salary increases approved by the Treasury last year, and the municipality's cutback of subsidies, its debts have climbed.

The Knesset committee asked the hospital to present in two weeks a detailed report on the deficit. Management was also asked to present within four months a master plan with additional beds, services and equipment it requires to be more financially stable. In the meantime, it has taken long-term loans and arranged to pay back the Income Tax Authority and suppliers gradually.

New Education Ministry program to eliminate sexual stereotyping

BATSHEVA TSUR and LIAT COLLINS

THE Education Ministry has embarked on an ambitious program to change sexual stereotypes among schoolchildren.

The ministry's department for equality between the sexes has put out a 300-page handbook for teachers entitled: "Each Sex Finds Equality." It deals with such topics as sexism in the educational system and sexual stereotypes in textbooks and children's literature.

The final section is devoted to programs and initiatives aimed at closing sexual gaps and doing away with stereotypes.

The program envisions starting education on sexual equality in nursery classes.

Prof Alice Shalvi, head of the Israel Women's Network, wrote to Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein this week to express appreciation for the work being done on the subject.

The material was also praised

by MKs at yesterday's session of the Knesset Committee on the Status of Women, which discussed gender-based stereotypes in the schools.

"Today we're beginning a cognitive revolution in the education system at the end of which the stereotypes in the system will be changed," said Dalia Itzik (Labor) who chairs the subcommittee on sexual equality in education.

Teachers need to be educated in these issues because they still convey different subliminal messages to boys and girls, relating to the former in terms of achievement and the latter in terms of emotions Naomi Blumenthal (Likud), said.

Blumenthal also noted that teachers had different expectations about boys' and girls' abilities which had long-term implications.

She also complained girls were not being trained to be leaders.

Internal report criticizes Knesset building cost overrun

LIAT COLLINS

THE Knesset is considering appointing a director-general to handle administrative matters, Speaker Shevah Weiss said yesterday, after an internal report blasted a NIS 21 million cost overrun in the construction of its new wing.

Weiss was speaking to reporters after a brief ceremony in which Knesset comptroller David Maronchik submitted his annual report.

Although the 1994 report does not mention any serious deficiencies, strong criticism was reserved for the cost of building the new wing and auditorium, as well as

the rocketing salaries of Knesset staff.

The new wing, which opened in November three years after scheduled, cost NIS 53m. instead of the planned NIS 32m. According to the report, the Knesset shows a NIS 600,000 deficit in its budget for the new wing and the comptroller recommends freezing new building and refurbishing projects "until the picture is clearer."

Weiss noted that combined intervention by himself, the comptroller, treasurer, and deputy

speaker had led to a savings of some NIS5 m. in costs of the new wing.

The cost of salaries has risen drastically over the last year, mainly due to increased overtime, Weiss said. While the report does not state the total expenditure on salaries, he noted a significant increase in work hours in all Knesset activities.

Weiss noted that, during the second quarter of the previous Knesset, the plenum sat for 556 hours, while the current Knesset sat for 717 hours; the committees sat 932 hours in the second quarter of the 12th Knesset, while the 13th Knesset's committees met for 1,052 hours during the equivalent period.

Part of the cost of salaries can be explained by the fact that Knesset employees receive an automatic bonus of 54% of their wages to compensate for the irregular lifestyle determined by the country's parliamentary system - and the overtime hours are on top of this. The comptroller suggested restricting overtime by demanding advance authorization.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Parents fear nearby collaborator family
Parents of children in four Afula kindergartens kept them home yesterday to protest against the housing of a collaborator's family nearby. The parents say the collaborator was murdered by Hamas activists. Parents' committee member Yossi Levy said the collaborator family's apartment is directly behind the kindergarten complex. He said parents fear further attempts by Hamas to take revenge on the family might harm their own children.

Amendment gives direct funding to sports
The Knesset yesterday passed an amendment to the Sports Wagering Law that is expected to revolutionize the distribution of betting revenue. The amendment, submitted by Meretz MK Dedi Zucker, alters the composition of the Betting Commission from six government and six sports association representatives to 18 members: seven from government, seven from sports bodies, and four from the public. The new makeup also ensures that the sports representatives will not have a veto. The amendment provides that betting revenue be distributed directly to sports bodies, and not via their sponsoring central associations as in the past.

Lotto winner can't collect prize
The anonymous winner of a NIS 6 million Lotto prize two weeks ago has been identified as a Gazan who is unable to collect the cash because of the closure. The man contacted Mifal Hapayis in Tel Aviv and expressed concern that he would not be able to collect the prize. But Mifal Hapayis spokesman Moshe Behagoun assured him that the prize will wait for him for up to six months.

Arab council heads want Jarisi left alone
The Forum of Arab Council Heads held an emergency meeting yesterday in Shifaram and issued a demand that police not question Nazareth Mayor Ramaz Jarisi about his opposition to settling former collaborators with Israel in his city. The police on Monday decided to delay calling Jarisi in for questioning. The forum also demanded an apology to Jarisi, and sent telegrams of protest to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and other officials. The council heads also demanded a meeting with Rabin to discuss the resettling of collaborators in the Israeli Arab sector.

Katzrin park to be developed
The Tourism Ministry is to invest NIS 100,000 in development of the ancient biblical park on the outskirts of Katzrin on the Golan Heights, the municipality spokesperson reported yesterday. She said the money would be used to preserve and restore the amphitheater at site, which also includes the remains of a village and a synagogue from the talmudic period. Golan Local Council head Sammy Bar-Lev welcomed the announcement, saying it took two years to get a commitment for investment on the project.

Libel suit against Amnon Dankner settled

A LIBEL suit against Dahn Ben-Amotz biographer Amnon Dankner was settled yesterday when the sides reached an agreement, under which Neriyah Ben-Yahin's name will be removed from future copies of the book.

Ben-Yahin filed a NIS 1 million suit against Dankner and Keter publishers in Tel Aviv District Court for writing in his book, *Dahn Ben-Amotz*, that she had procured minors to engage in sexual acts with Ben-Amotz.

With the help of the arbitrator the sides reached the agreement, which was accepted by the court and has the status of a judicial verdict.

According to the agreement, Dankner acknowledged that Bar-Yahin did not carry out the acts described in his book, and Keter agreed to donate NIS 25,000 to a fund associated with Petah-Tikva's Beilinson Hospital as an act of conciliation.

Bar-Yahin claimed that the publication of the book had ruined her reputation and caused her humiliation. Dankner, however, had claimed that Bar-Yahin told him the information during interviews he conducted for the book and he believed that she had been telling the truth. (Iftim)

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Chechen rebels talk of Grozny retreat

LAWRENCE SHEETS

GROZNY, Russia

RUSSIAN forces said yesterday that they had seized more of the Chechen capital Grozny, and one rebel said Chechen military commanders were considering pulling out of the battered city.

"Our headquarters is now deciding whether or not to give up the city," said Sulman, a bearded, 22-year-old fighter in the southern Grozny suburb of Chernorechiye.

But he made clear resistance would be waged from other parts of Chechnya, declaring: "This is just the beginning. We will fight to the end."

In Moscow, Defense Ministry officials told Interfax news agency that the Russian army, which bore the brunt of fighting over the last two months, was preparing to withdraw most troops and leave Interior Ministry forces and police in charge.

Significantly fewer Chechen fighters entered Grozny during the day and no armored vehicles could be seen, a clear sign the defenders were scaling down their fight after more than six weeks of battles in the city.

Some of those leaving Grozny said battles were still continuing around the crucial Miatka Square, focus of Chechen resistance to the attackers.

The ministry said in a statement that its troops had liberated Minutka. But shells were still falling around the area at the rate of two or three a minute in the afternoon — a considerably lighter frequency than on previous days.

"The Russians are around Minutka. Some of our fighters are battling them by the [nearby] bus station," said one rebel.

Chechen commanders acknowledged they have no chance of holding out forever against the Russians and say they will retreat to the area south of Grozny to mount a partisan war.

Correspondents who have visited villages south of Grozny say they are filled with armed fighters. Russian military officials have said the town of Gudermes, 40 kilometers east of Grozny with strong fortifications and containing an estimated 5,000 fighters, is likely to become the next center of resistance.

Sources in the Interior and Defense ministries told Interfax that 907 soldiers and paratroops had been killed since the war started. More than 3,400 had been wounded.

(Reuters)

Report clears Thatcher in 'arms-for-Iraq' probe

LONDON (Reuters) — A British inquiry has concluded that Margaret Thatcher was unaware of illegal exports of defense-related equipment to Iraq when she was prime minister during the late 1980s, newspapers said yesterday.

A final report in Britain's politically-sensitive "arms-for-Iraq" probe, chaired by Lord Justice Richard Scott, has still to be made public.

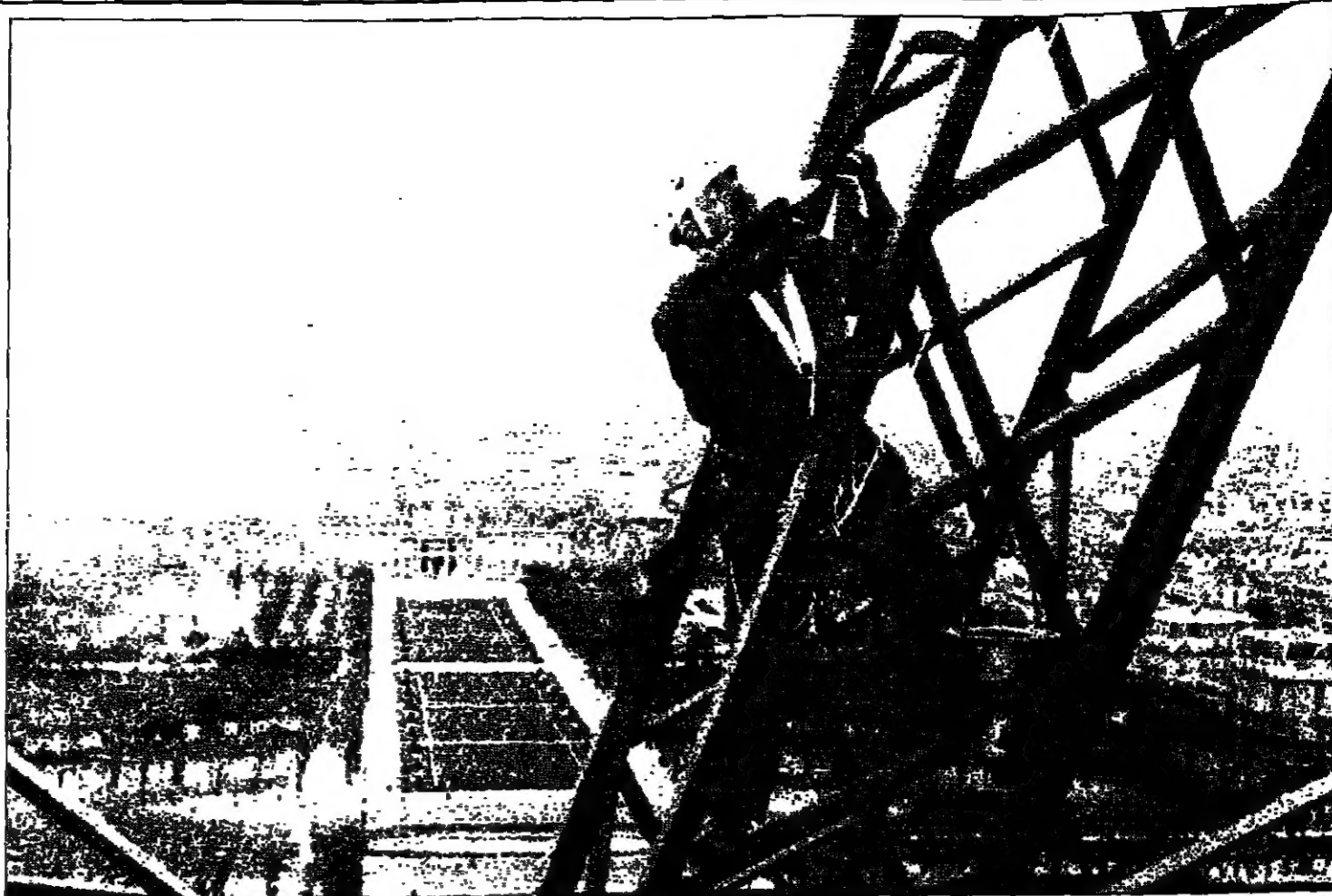
Draft excerpts from the Scott inquiry showed there was no evidence to substantiate allegations that decisions on the approval of exports in 1987-8 were brought to Thatcher's attention, the *Financial Times* and *Daily Telegraph* said.

A spokeswoman for the inquiry declined to comment on the reports. Its findings are due to be published around April.

Set up by Thatcher's successor John Major in November 1992, the inquiry has looked into allegations the government broke its own rules barring arms sales to Iraq before the 1991 Gulf War.

British troops formed part of the multinational force which ejected Iraq from Kuwait in 1991.

The inquiry is also investigating whether the government tried to stop the policy coming to light in a court case, preferring to allow the defendants to go to jail than have official duplicity exposed.



Equipped with alpine-style safety ropes, one of a 25-man elite team begins the seventh repainting of the Eiffel Tower. The painters will smear 60 tons of "Eiffel Tower Brown" on the 18,000 pieces of metal which comprise the 106-year-old monument. (AP)

Juror dismissed in Simpson trial

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A juror in the O.J. Simpson trial was dismissed yesterday, leaving 21 jurors and alternates to hear the case.

No reason for the removal was given, but it came after a private, two-hour meeting between Superior Court Judge Lance Ito and attorneys for both sides.

One of the 10 alternates was then chosen to sit on the 12-person jury.

A 54-year-old black male was chosen to replace a 63-year-old white female on the panel. The jury now consists of seven women and five men. The ethnic breakdown now becomes nine blacks, one white and two mixed-race jurors.

Ito told the jurors very little about what took place or why it took so long.

"There were some very delicate matters that I had to inquire into this morning that took a significant period of time, and I appreciate your indulgence in this matter," Ito told jurors.

"It became necessary for me to excuse one of the jurors in this case."

Prosecutors shifted attention yesterday from domestic violence to evidence about the actual killings June 12 of Nicole Brown Simpson and her waiter friend Ronald Goldman.

The first witnesses called yesterday by Deputy District Attorney Marcia Clark were employees of the Mezzaluna Restaurant where Ms. Simpson ate shortly before she was slain. Goldman worked as a waiter at the restaurant.

Also yesterday, the defense accused the prosecution of violating a law requiring prosecutors to turn over all evidence favorable to the defendant. The defense referred to a videotape, shown in court Monday, showing Simpson leaving his daughter's dance concert hours before the slayings June 12.

Defense Attorney Carl Douglas said the tape, which he contended was given to the prosecution last summer, "clearly turned out to be a piece of very favorable evidence." Two prosecution witnesses, including Ms. Simpson's sister Denise Brown, had described Simpson as moody at the concert, while the tape shows him greeting his former in-laws and picking up his son.

Prosecutor Christopher Darden said the delay was "just another innocent mistake" in a case that has generated thousands of pages of documents and hundreds of videotapes. He also disputed that it was favorable to the defense, saying Simpson "looks like a completely different person" on the tape.

Ito said he would look into the matter.

Monday, when the videotape was shown and Simpson's demeanor at the concert was discussed, was a day of contrasting images for jurors.

Witness Candace Garvey said the angry-looking Simpson who showed up at the June 12 recital "was just not the same person I was used to seeing."

"It was almost like he was simmering," said Garvey, the wife of former baseball star Steve Garvey, and a friend of Nicole Brown Simpson. "When he stared at me I felt like he was looking right through me and it scared me a little bit."

Defense lawyers, however, argued that witnesses' memories have been altered by time and emotion. After showing the jury the videotape, defense attorney Johnnie Cochran Jr. said it showed the kind of man Simpson really is: happy, affectionate and family-oriented.

Also Monday, Denise Brown, Ms. Simpson's older sister, wrapped up a second day of testimony. She said Simpson behaved strangely at the recital, greeting all the Browns except Ms. Simpson and staring at her while sitting in the back of the auditorium.

German neo-Nazis gain military experience in former Yugoslavia

WILDBAD KREUTH, Germany (Reuters) — German neo-Nazis are training as mercenaries in former Yugoslavia and using their new knowledge of weapons and tactics to prepare attacks in Germany, federal investigators said yesterday.

A Federal Criminal Office (BKA) official told a seminar that a neo-Nazi detained after returning from an unspecified area of former Yugoslavia said right-wing extremists were learning how to build and use bombs, mines and detonators.

They are also bringing weapons, ammunition, explosives and mines back to Germany, he added.

The BKA official did not say who was training the neo-Nazis, whom investigators view as a potentially serious threat to Germany's internal security.

Authorities discovered a cache of neo-Nazi weapons and explosives, including a shrapnel bomb, near Frankfurt in November, the expert in countering extreme right-wing groups said. He asked not to be named.

He added that the BKA suspected other such deposits existed elsewhere, and had indications neo-Nazis were discussing attacks against potential targets in Germany.

Sheikh's lawyers accuse US judge of cover-up

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Defense lawyers for Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman and his followers accused of plotting to bomb US landmarks asked for a mistrial yesterday, alleging that the judge covered up plea negotiations with a key defendant.

The arguments followed a surprise guilty plea Monday by Siddig Ibrahim Siddig Ali, the alleged mastermind of the scheme. Court records unsealed after the plea revealed that he contacted the government January 23 — one week before opening statements in the trial — seeking to cooperate.

Transcripts show that US District Judge Michael Mukasey appointed a separate lawyer Janu-

ary 24 to represent him in the negotiations. Opening statements began January 30.

Defense lawyers have filed a motion for a mistrial based on both judicial and prosecutorial misconduct. They argue it was improper for the judge to have allowed them to present opening arguments without knowledge that a cooperation agreement was in the works.

Testimony resumed after the hearing on the mistrial, with government witnesses focusing on defendant El Sayyid Nosair. Nosair was acquitted of charges that he murdered Rabbi Meir Kahane, but he was convicted of lesser weapons and assault charges.

Rwandan refugees head home

GENEVA (Reuters) — Ninety-seven Rwandans returned to their war-ravaged homeland yesterday under the first organized repatriation from neighboring Burundi, the United Nations refugee agency said.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also said it expected Zairean troops to be deployed by the end of the week to police explosive refugee camps in eastern Zaire.

Sadako Ogata of Japan, who holds the title of UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said her agency would deploy 40 to 50 military and police advisers to support the Zairean troops in their efforts to end violence and intimidation at teeming camps near Goma and Bukavu, which hold 1.1 million Rwandans.

"Violence and general insecurity in these camps have not only cost the lives of a number of refugees, but have also been a major impediment to the promotion of safe and orderly repatriation to Rwanda," she said in a speech.

"The end result is that, for the first time, UNHCR will be deploying a number of military and police advisers to work directly in support of the Zairean authorities in an effort to bring this exceptionally difficult problem under control."

UN officials accuse former Rwandan troops and exiled Hutu militia of waging a campaign of intimidation in the six Goma camps which hold 743,000 Rwandan refugees. Another 357,000 are estimated to live in dozens of smaller camps near Bukavu.

In November in the most recent major incident at Goma, 27 people were killed, most of them refugee women and children.

The launch of the agency's long-planned repatriation program in Burundi took place a day after the Security Council decided to send a fact-finding mission to the two countries.



Michael Carns (AP)

Clinton taps Air Force general for CIA job

WASHINGTON (AP) — Michael Carns, a retired four-star Air Force general, is President Clinton's choice to replace James Woolsey as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, an administration official said yesterday.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the selection would be announced this week. The only thing holding it up "was a scheduling matter." Carns has been in California this week, the administration official said.

White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta said in a television interview that Carns had met with President Clinton about the CIA job. "He's certainly near the top of the list, but that decision is for the president," Panetta said.

Press secretary Mike McCurry said Carns was "at the top" of Clinton's list and that the president would like to announce his choice this week.

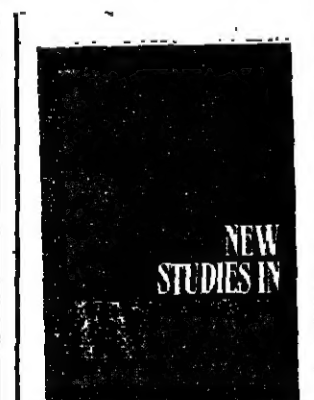
The administration official said Clinton chose Carns because of his management experience in the Air Force. The background could be vital for somebody tapped to head the CIA, an agency recovering from the Aldrich Ames spy scandal and scrambling to redefine its mission now that the Cold War is over.

Carns, a former fighter pilot, has never worked at the CIA and has no known direct intelligence experience.

He helped run the Air Force during the Persian Gulf War and the Bosnia and Rwanda humanitarian missions. He retired last year and is now a consultant in California.

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Antisemitic crimes rise in Germany

BONN (Reuters) — The number of antisemitic crimes rose in Germany last year even as the frequency of right-wing extremist violence declined overall, crime-fighters said on Monday.

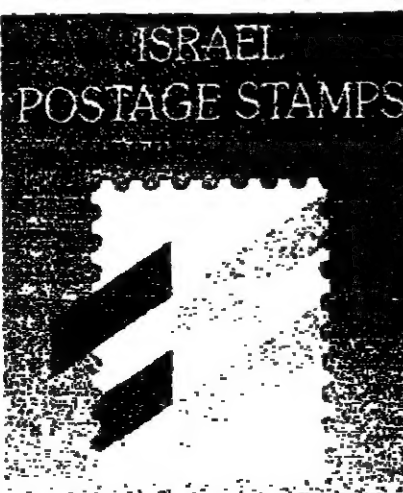
Figures compiled by the State Office for Protecting the Constitution in Hamburg showed there were 802 crimes of an antisemitic nature recorded by November 15 in 1994, a spokesman said.

That compares to 656 in all of 1993 and 627 in 1992.

But the number of violent antisemitic crimes slipped to 61 for the year as a whole from 72 in 1993, he said.

The news followed an interior ministry announcement last week that the number of racist attacks dropped sharply in 1994.

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סניף מרכזי

THE FOLLOWING excerpts are from a recent interview given by Adnan Anwar, assistant on political affairs to the secretary-general of the Arab League:

Q: What is your opinion of [Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon] Peres's call for Israel to join the Arab League?

A: There is no possibility of accepting this call for many reasons. The most important among them is that Israel does not meet the criteria for joining.

This is because the Charter of the Arab League requires in the first section of the conditions for membership that countries accepted for membership be a part of the Arab people, from the standpoint of culture, history and language.

Naturally, Israel does not meet these requirements, and therefore the request for admission would be denied.

If Peres believes that the Israeli entity fills these basic requirements, then it is up to him to tender a request to join and then

Arab League official to Israel: Don't call us

the legal steps will be taken with regards to acceptance as a member.

Q: If the Arab League were changed to a Middle East League, would Israel be accepted as a member?

A: The Arab League will continue to exist, there will be no change in it and it will not cease its activities. It is the only Arab entity which unites the Arab states from a cultural and historical standpoint and in terms of a common tradition.

Activities under such names as a Middle East Common Market would have no effect on the Arab League.

The Arabs will not agree to change the Arab League. Israel will not be accepted as a member in any assembly in the region without the agreement of the Arabs themselves.

After the complete collapse of the Zionist national myth, and the complete conversion of historical Palestine into one democratic state to which all Palestinians will return, Palestine, with all of its historic lands, can join the Arab League.

Q: But this would be difficult to achieve. What would be the case regarding Jews living in Greater Palestine under these circumstances?

A: This is not a difficulty. We want a large democratic Palestinian state in which a government elected in legal and democratic elections will rule. The entity will therefore be an Arab entity.

It is clear that the number of Jews will be large, but the Arabs have never even differentiated between its Moslem citizens and those of other religions.

El Majala (Saudi weekly), London, January 22.



TWO TRACKS TO EGYPT

AS EFFORTS were under way to avert a serious diplomatic crisis between Egypt and Israel over what was called the "punish Egypt" document published in Ha'aretz, the paper published on January 17 a second document attributed to intelligence sources. It dealt with Egypt and military developments and predicted war within 10 years.

News analyses subsequently published in Egypt suggest that the publication of the documents

occurred within the framework of a struggle between Prime Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres.

They were said to differ on the attitude Israel should adopt to Egypt's determination to pursue the issue of Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Senior officials in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry were said to be waiting for guidance from Foreign Minister Amr Moussa to frame a response to the Israeli documents warning of the possibility of a general war between Egypt and Israel.

Knowledgeable sources in Cairo say it is clear that Israeli policy toward Egypt is being managed on two conflicting tracks.

The first, run by Peres, gives priority to calm diplomacy, to strengthening ties with Egypt, and to avoiding any attempt to

abandon relations with Egypt in favor of new Arab relationships.

The second side, under Rabin, favors more rigid relations with Egypt and delaying normalization in order to sharpen the dispute over the nuclear convention.

Egypt is said to have information that Rabin has instructed his officials to give priority to cooperation with Jordan and to push it to the maximum of "normality" within three years at most.

El-Ithad (UAE), January 19.

WEAK MOSLEMS, STRONG JEWS

IN THE New York Times of January 29, Youssef M. Ibrahim wrote about the religious edict issued by Saudi Arabia's highest theological authority, Sheikh Abdel Aziz ibn Baz.

The sheikh ruled in December that Saudi rulers are permitted to

pursue normal relations with Israel.

However, the sheikh made the following point in a column published on January 20 in the Saudi weekly *Al-Muslim*:

"It would be impossible to consider peace with the Jews if Moslems were strong. If they were strong, reconciliation would not be permitted and they would be obliged to fight the Jews."

He did not explain in the column if the obligation to fight Jews would be reinstated if the balance of power were to tip in the Moslems' favor in the future.

ISLAMIC JIHAD

REACTING to the arrest of Islamic Jihad members by Palestinian Authority police in the Gaza Strip (in response to the massacre at Beit Lid), the organization's secretary-general, Faizi Shakaki, said Yasser Arafat will have to arrest 90 percent of the residents of the Strip if he wants to continue with his present policies.

Elkafah Alarabi (Lebanon), January 29.

Killings of women worry Jordanians

RANA SABBAGH
AMMAN

WHEN a Jordanian teenager stabbed and shot his handicapped sister to death in front of their parents for having an illegitimate child, the family ululated in a traditional display of joy.

That September killing of 18-year-old Jizia was not a rarity in a country where "family honor" is often defined by what happens to women - willingly or otherwise.

Months earlier, Ayed, 32, slit the throat of his 16-year-old sister Kifaya. She had been raped by a younger brother, forced to have an abortion and married off to a 50-year-old man who divorced her six months later.

"I have cleansed my family's honor," declared Ayed when Kifaya lay dead on the floor. The official report said the family fired in the air in celebration.

Those two were among 23 women victims of "honor killings" in Jordan this year - out of a total of 86 cases of premeditated murder recorded by police.

Lawyers say the figure could be much higher as many cases are never reported in an Islamic kingdom torn between ethnic traditions and rapid modernization.

In addition, there are hundreds of cases of abuse, beatings and marriages forced on women accused of "immoral" behavior.

Although honor killings have been carried out for centuries in the region, such crimes are only now emerging into public light.

"People have become more daring in discussing these crimes," said lawyer Asma Khader, a leading feminist and head of the Jordan Women Union. "The media is also dedicating more coverage on that."

But for most officials, the topic remains taboo.

In social and family norms, it is unacceptable for a couple to live together unless married.

Sociologists say rapid social change, including greater urbanization and the rising number of women in the labor force where they meet men, are contributing to the number of such crimes.

Lawyers and officials say that in many cases, women were killed because male relatives had proof of "immoral" behavior - from losing their virginity before



Residents of Damascus sift through the displays at the city's open-air bicycle market. Among the bits and pieces are some complete bicycles, and even the rare new one.

Aging Arab rulers - who will be next?

KIM MURPHY
DAMASCUS

ON a foggy morning just over a year ago, Syria's vice president and a senior security aide telephoned President Hafez Assad and suggested, tentatively, that they come around for coffee. The aging president was wearing a long Arab robe and his face was drawn when his visitors arrived.

"He opened the door and said, 'Is it the army in revolt?'" said one Damascus palace watcher, recalling the now often-told account.

Apparently, neither man answered for a moment. "No one wanted to tell him, you see."

In a region where an army revolt can spell instant death and even civil war, the real news was just as bad, maybe worse: Assad's eldest son, Basil, was dead, killed in a car accident that morning.

Dead with him was Assad's dream of smoothly handing over his rule to the young man who had been carefully cultivated in the top echelons of power.

Now Assad's next-oldest son,

Bashar, has been brought back from medical school in London to begin what appears to be the long process of leadership grooming.

Throughout the Middle East, a generation of Arab leaders who rose to power in the turbulent coups d'etat and revolutions of the 1950s and 1960s is growing old.

NOWHERE IS the succession drama more precarious than in Syria, where Assad has ruled since 1970. Even the prospect of the demise of the 64-year-old president raises fears of possible chaos or armed conflict in Damascus.

His tiny sect of Alawite Moslems has tight control over the massive military-security-intelligence apparatus that governs Syria and its Sunni Moslem majority.

Many think Syria's most influential Alawite generals would

unite around a common new figurehead to maintain the status quo.

But it is just as possible that they would begin feuding among themselves, sparking a conflict between the Sunni and Alawite sects.

Elsewhere in the Arab world, the future is equally in doubt:

- In Jordan, the future of one of the region's most stable monarchies is by no means certain. King Hussein's younger brother, Crown Prince Hassan, has been designated heir apparent. Yet Hassan's close sympathies with native Jordanians have caused grumbling among the large Palestinian population.
- In Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak last year broke his pledge to serve only two six-year terms by standing for a third term, swearing it would be his last. Now, Egyptians are wondering: Will Mubarak, 66, seek a fourth

term? Or will Egypt provide a new test case for the Arab world, in which a leader retires peacefully - alive - and hands over the reins of authority to a freely elected successor?

- In Iraq, President Saddam Hussein, like Assad, has often seemed to be grooming his son, Uday, as his successor. But the fractious ethnic and religious nature of Iraqi society makes turmoil a virtual certainty unless a powerful force within the military grabs authority.
- PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, 65, will eventually face elections in the territories. It is considered likely that Arafat will assure that any elections guarantee his dominance despite rising opposition from Hamas and other factions opposed to peace.
- In Saudi Arabia, King Fahd, believed to be 73 years old, is steadily declining both physically and mentally. The line of succession is clear, with Fahd's brother, Prince Abdullah, also in his 70s, long designated as crown prince.

(Los Angeles Times)

Population plan in Iran good 'model'

IRAN'S government gets little credit for much in the international arena.

But, say UN experts, it has one of the world's most successful population control programs, melding religion with realpolitik.

Iran's program may serve as a guide for acting on some of the UN population plan's tougher recommendations, such as reproductive health and women's education. For Moslem countries, it offers an explicit religious rationale for family planning.

"Iran has a good rural health system, very good access, it's soundly planned and it responds to people's needs," said Dr. Nafis Sadik, head of the UN Population Fund in New York.

The Islamic leadership, which for years had no clear population policy, was shocked to learn the number of Iranians topped 50 million in 1987.

"Essentially, they had to worry about the regime's survival," with a burgeoning population that could overwhelm the economy, said Homa Hoodfar, an anthropology professor at Concordia University in Montreal.

Iran's answer was a rapid and extensive campaign through radio and television broadcasts, sermons during Friday prayers and outreach to the countryside, she said. A billboard in Teheran read, "Daughters or sons, two children are enough."

The regime defined the campaign in Islamic terms. It made an explicit pronouncement that contraceptives were not prohibited and justified the ruling with various Islamic texts and religious judgments. Hoodfar said.

The government made grassroots awareness a priority, stressing that overpopulation would undermine Iran's development. Factories set up health clinics that provide condoms and birth-control pills as well as counseling. Government hospitals began performing tubal ligation and vasectomies for free.

More importantly, the government pushed women's education, and plans are in the works to make population part of the national curriculum, Hoodfar said.

The results surprised even the government. The rate of population growth fell from 3.4 percent in 1986 to 2.7 percent by 1992.

(Associated Press)



Clinton Anderson
Air Force
general
CIA job

Umm Kaltoum still has people hooked

DALIA BALIGH
CAIRO

HER voice is legend, and her devotees number in the tens of millions. Some 20 years after her death, Umm Kaltoum is still the reigning queen of song throughout the Arab world.

Time in any Arab radio station and you will hear her voice, powerful and clear. In Cairo, coffee shops and taxis regularly play her love songs. Even new generations who never saw her get hooked on Umm Kaltoum.

Her voice was an alto that stretched to soprano or tenor among the distinctive tones of Arab music. But it was more the wealth of feeling she conveyed that drove her audiences wild, as she repeated the verses time and time again.

Her influence remains unshaken, although she died in 1975, at 71. Her tapes are still best-sellers in Arab countries from the Atlantic to the Gulf.

Critics say the purity of Umm Kaltoum's voice remains unparalleled. Her songs were composed by the most talented of her generation - love lyrics and nationalist anthems, five-minute religious chants and two-hour classical songs. She did them all, and people loved them.

Umm Kaltoum Ibrahim el-Beltagy was named after a daughter of the Prophet Mohammed when she was born in a Nile Delta village. Her first public performance was at age six. Her pay was a bowl of rice pudding. She went on to become one of the richest and most powerful women in the Arab world.

She had a close working relationship with Egypt's first president, Gamal Abdel Nasser. A book titled *Nasser and Umm Kaltoum* says she was the most successful propaganda tool for Nasser's pan-Arab policies.

But she also sang out against Nasser's regime when her friend, journalist Mustafa Anani, was jailed on trumped-up charges of spying for the US.

Give me my freedom, let go of my hands.

I have given all I have to give and have nothing left.

Your hands have bloodied my wrists,

went the lyrics of her famous song, *Al-Adal* ("The Ruins").

"When she sang those lyrics, the audience went wild. She reflected their anguish at the injustice of Nasser's regime and, at a time when people were afraid to whisper their discontent, she said it out loud," said Maurice Guindi, a fan who for 27 years attended every live performance in Cairo.

Tall, with pitch-black hair, she wasn't pretty, but she was striking, standing a meter from the microphone in a long evening dress, dripping in diamonds and wringing flowing scarves in her hands. She said the scarves were practical. She was apprehensive at the beginning of every performance and got damp hands.

In 1972, when she was 68, her voice broke on a high note toward the end of a concert. She stopped singing and a tear appeared on her cheek. The audience went wild with applause, but she felt it was out of pity. Umm Kaltoum never sang again in public. But her voice lives on. (AP)

SAVE TIME AND ENERGY

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The wild east

THE trade dispute between China and the United States so far resembles Chinese shadow-theater rather than commercial warfare. While the threatened 100 percent duties announced by Washington on China's substantial \$1.08 billion worth of exports are real enough, a huge US trade delegation is still planning to visit China later this month in pursuit of a bilateral deal worth some \$8 billion.

Of course the 50-strong delegation, headed by US Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, is going to discuss cooperation in energy matters unrelated to the current row over China's piracy of intellectual property. Nonetheless, the mission underlines the curious relationship between two of the world's biggest trade partners.

While they trade insults over the copyright row, both Beijing and Washington have been issuing flattering assessments of their relations in other areas. "Recent reforms in the Chinese energy sector offer tremendous opportunities for American firms to participate as partners in this expanding market," said one US official. "The primary purpose of this mission is to establish a stronger relationship with America," answered Beijing. And it was only last August that US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and entourage visited China to sign billions of dollars in new business.

So, at this point, and with three weeks to run before the tit-for-tat sanctions over copyrights come into effect, it will be surprising if the issue develops into an all-out trade war. Two earlier US-China trade disputes were settled in the time between the announcement of sanctions and their effective date, and the row over China's most favored nation status became an annual soap opera before President Clinton put an end to the human rights linkage with MFN. Reports from Hong Kong, where much US business penetration of China is negotiated and managed, indicates that American companies remain unfazed by the threats of trade war.

What has been forgotten in this week's hubbub is that Washington considers the maintenance of a stable long-term investment environment in China to be of vastly greater importance than the dispute over pirated sneakers, software and pop songs. With the disappointing performance of post-Soviet Russia, China, for all its human, political and commercial faults, is the business superpower of the future. Strategic business planning for the Chinese market is a

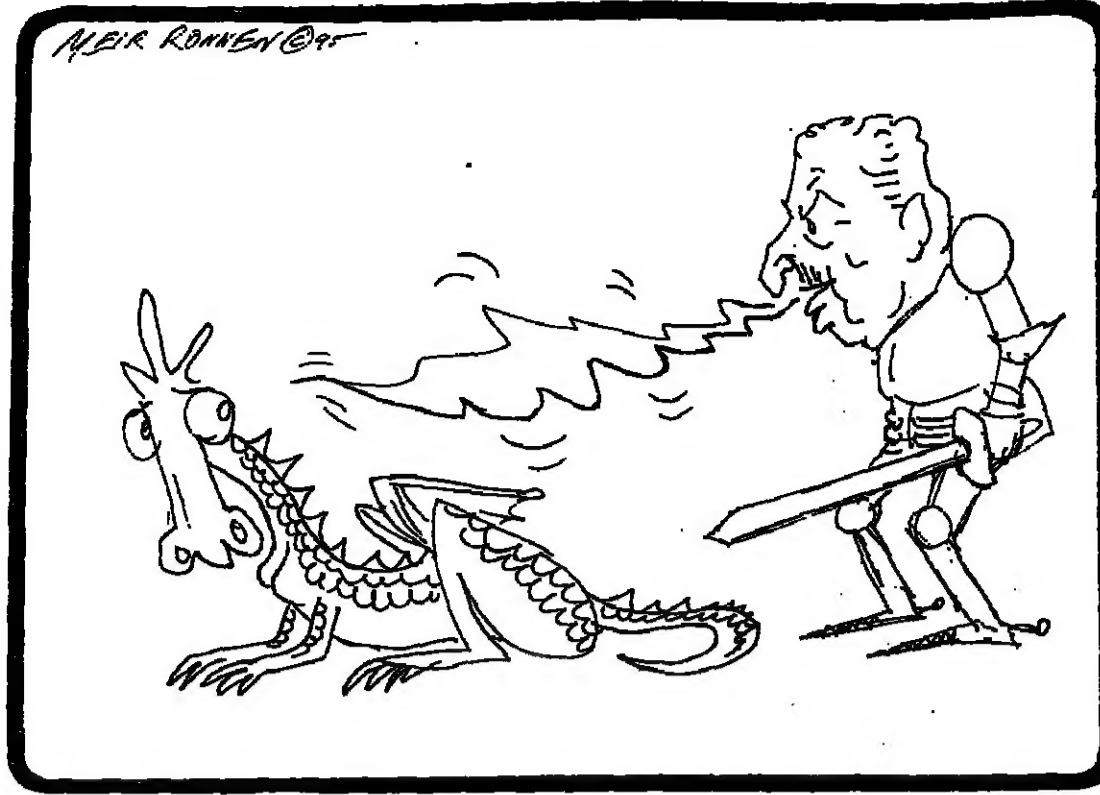
long road to the future; the threatened sanctions are a mere bump on the road unlikely to deflect long-term investors.

Despite the noise and pressure over piracy, there seems to be an underlying understanding in the US administration that the Beijing government may be limited in what it can do to address American concerns. The free-wheeling entrepreneurs of south China are almost as remote from Beijing as they are from Washington. China in fact has some very sophisticated anti-piracy laws. As often in this vast country, enforcement and not legislation is the problem. Many of the pirating enterprises are also under the protection of local officials who pay scant attention to edicts from Beijing these days.

Neither can the West have it every way in China. A strong central command communist government is just what the West has been urging China to dispense with. China has watched Russia opt for democracy at the expense of the economy and has decided to try the other path of opting for economic progress first. The results have been spectacular in the first few years of this decade - which is why American, European and Japanese businessmen are hammering on the door of the Chinese market.

It is a little disingenuous for some Western businessmen first to exploit the cheap skilled labor of China to assemble expensive consumer goods like designer footwear, computers, software and CDs - and then scream foul when the same skilful Chinese exploit the foreign designer labels to market copies of these Western goodies at half-price. This is not, of course, to condone the pirating of Western skills and intellectual talents. But the morality of some of the multinationals who made vast profits from cheap labor is no less dubious than that of Chinese entrepreneurs making money from the skills the foreigners taught them. Hence a little humble negotiation over mutual respect, backed by legal agreements, is called for here, not self-righteous indignation.

Neither would a little patience go amiss. If Rome was not built in a day, the new China may be allowed some more generous latitude. New frontiers have always started as Wild West - who should know that better than Americans. The piracy industry in China is part of the commercial Wild East that central reform has unleashed. It will take a little time for the mandarins and lawyers to reach the outbreak.



Kissinger was right

MOSHE ZAK

IN the past I have taken issue with Henry Kissinger's insistent claim that Israel has no foreign policy, only domestic policy. Regrettably, however, I am forced to concede that four recent incidents in Israel's international relations confirm Dr. Kissinger's view.

● Last week, Israel's request to the German, French and Spanish foreign ministers that they refrain from holding political talks at Orient House was swiftly publicized by the Foreign Ministry, in a bid to show how scrupulously the law prohibiting political activity by the PLO and the Palestinian Authority in Jerusalem is being observed.

But the ministry failed to consider the external implications. This public demand from Israel put the European ministers in an embarrassing position. They couldn't appear to be knocking under to Israel, which would have offended the Palestinians. By going public with its request, Israel frustrated any possibility of modifying the ministers' schedule of meetings. The result: a "victory" for the PLO, against Israel.

Faisal Husseini can now congratulate himself that the law passed by the Knesset is powerless to prevent diplomatic activity at Orient House; while Nabil Shaath threatened a Jewish audience in Washington this week that moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem would "explode" the peace process.

● Oman's foreign minister visited then prime minister Shamir's home in Jerusalem a few years ago, and Israeli officials were recently in Oman, so there was no urgency for last Saturday's rendezvous in Aqaba, where Foreign Minister Peres was told that the time wasn't yet ripe for open diplomatic relations.

But given the national mood after the failure of the Oslo formula, the Foreign Ministry felt it

had to raise morale and show that all those official trips round the world were bearing fruit.

This was what lay behind the Aqaba meeting, even though Israeli intelligence is quite aware of the fact that following the Alexandria summit (Mubarak, Assad and King Fahd), the ambassadors of the Gulf states had been summoned to the Saudi foreign min-

istry and handed a request from King Fahd urging them not to establish diplomatic relations with Israel just now.

THE PRIME minister could quite well have renewed talks with the PLO at the Erez checkpoint without last week's Cairo summit. But he found it hard to get past the barricade of public anger built up since the recent murderous terror attacks. His intention was to use the quadripartite summit in Cairo to surmount this steep hurdle.

The bright lights at the meal breaking the Ramadan fast temporarily dazzled Israel, who had supported President Weizmann's call to shelve the talks. Then, when it became apparent that the Cairo summit had in fact achieved nothing, a "senior political source" offered to reveal details of an exchange at the summit between Rabin and Arafat. Rabin was portrayed as the victor in the verbal duel, leaving Arafat with egg on his face.

While Israelis might have relished Rabin's verbal victory, the true test of progress isn't reprisals in Cairo, but the results of talks at the Erez checkpoint.

Even those opposed to negotiations with the PLO can only wonder why this exchange, so humiliating for Arafat, was made public. Its disclosure might cause a rise in popularity opinion polls, but it will have no effect on the bargaining. On the contrary: Arafat's supporters in the Arab world will demand that the talks at the Erez checkpoint offer some compensation to the PLO chairman for the leak of his humiliation in Cairo.

● Out of domestic considerations, Israel did not respond adequately to the incoming US ambassador, who testified before a Congressional committee that relocating the American Embassy to Jerusalem would cause the disintegration of the peace process. This is a dangerous assumption, affecting Israel's most sensitive issue: Jerusalem. The ambassador-designate is well aware that the central issue in the Arab-Israeli dispute is eastern Jerusalem, while the intended site for the embassy is in the south of the city.

Not long ago, some South American embassies moved to the capital without harming the peace process. The ambassador could have said that no changes should be made in Jerusalem during the negotiating period - but why threaten an "explosion"? Israel ought to have responded, if only for the sake of its friends in Congress who have worked so hard for the proposed Jerusalem Law.

The prerequisite for a good foreign policy is the drive to achieve substantial results in strengthening the state, not the bid to win points at home. Leaking a verbal skirmish with Arafat is useless, but containing erosion in US public expressions on Jerusalem is imperative.

The writer, a veteran journalist, comments on current affairs.

Sins of power

YOSEF GOELL

THE ceding to Jordan last week of several hundred square kilometers of Israeli land in the Arava Valley, prior to the finalization of Knesset legislation authorizing such a transfer, was treated as a small, formal slip of constitutional etiquette.

In fact, it highlights the need for major constitutional legislation to shore up the powers of the Knesset.

The transfer of the land (in return for arrangements for Israeli farmers to continue cultivating some of it) was part of the peace agreement with Jordan concluded between Prime Minister Rabin and King Hussein. Given the widespread popular and parliamentary support for that agreement, there is no doubt that the legislation would have passed the Knesset with broad majority support.

However, the transfer clearly required prior approval by the Knesset. Israeli sovereignty resides in the people, and not in the prime minister or the government, and the Knesset is the sole representative of the people.

When it was discovered, on the day of the transfer, that the Knesset had not yet completed the legislation, Knesset Speaker She-

Heads should have rolled after the transfer of land to Jordan

vah Weiss sent a formal letter of complaint to Rabin. The Prime Minister's Office responded with an "Oops, we're sorry," the legislation was passed a few days later and the whole issue was quickly forgotten.

But political, bureaucratic and military heads should have rolled. It is hard to imagine a greater sin in a constitutional democracy like Israel than the government executing a major and irreversible step before obtaining the express approval of the legislature.

IN VIEW of the imminence of such issues as the Rabin government's determination to withdraw from large parts of the West Bank, the Golan Heights and, despite pious promises to the contrary, most likely from parts of Jerusalem, too, it is essential that the recurrence of such "slips" be prevented.

We need legislation to complement the legislation adopted three years ago for the direct election of a prime minister.

This must clearly define the new relationships between the executive arm of government - enhanced by the direct popular election of its head, the prime minister - and the popularly elected legislature.

The rationale for the reform was the desire of both major parties to free themselves of the excessive blackmailing powers of the small parties in the coalition horse-trading that follows every election.

The idea was to strengthen the two major parties; it was, quite clearly, not to strengthen the executive at the expense of the legislature.

The experience of the past three years has shown that only part of the original intention stands any chance of being realized.

Rabin's total surrender to Shas points to the likelihood that the previous post-election coalition haggling will now be replaced by the courting of the small parties by prime ministerial candidates prior to the elections.

Such deals will be made not only with the haredi parties - whose leaders can promise to deliver large blocs of blindly loyal voters - but possibly with an Islamic Party which can make similar promises.

Foreign Minister Peres this weekend reiterated his demand that the direct elections law be rescinded, warning that it harbors dangers to democracy unless accompanied by parallel reforms in the system of Knesset elections.

The logical way of confronting such apprehensions is not to rescind the law but to adopt those "parallel reforms," thus ensuring a clear delineation of powers between the prime minister, the government and the Knesset.

The writer comments on public affairs.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Sir, - Orthodox organizations in the US have once again demonstrated that they are unwilling to accept an Israel that stands for freedom of religion ("Orthodox groups quit American Zionist Movement over call for religious pluralism," January 16). To the credit of the AZM, it put principle before expediency and passed the resolution calling upon "the government and the Knesset to extend full freedom of religion to all Jews in Israel."

Conservative and Reform Jews in this country do not enjoy religious equality. Their rabbis are not recognized; they cannot serve on religious courts or religious municipal councils; they cannot officiate at weddings or divorces; their synagogues do not enjoy the benefits extended to Orthodox synagogues. The list could go on and on.

For years I have been trying to persuade the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel to take a stand on religious discrimination. The AACI has consistently refused to do so, its leadership maintaining that such a move would split the organization, and that Orthodox members would quit.

It is time for the AACI to do as the AZM did, and adopt a forthright stand for the principles that Judaism and democracy stand for.

ELIEZER WHARTMAN
Jerusalem.

STOP THE TALKS

Sir, - I shared with my fellow citizens of this small country the absolute horror and sadness of the taking of young lives at the Beit-Lid bus stop on Sunday morning. What will it take in terms of Jewish blood being spilled before our government wakes up the fact that peace at any price is something we simply cannot afford?

There must come a time when the people of Israel will no longer tolerate a government which not only has lost any sense of attachment to the Land of Israel, but more depressingly, no longer has any compassion for its own people.

The time has come for a cessation of these so-called peace talks, for the only losers from such a move would be those who are perpetrating these acts of cruelty and destruction.

DAVID HERSHAM
Jerusalem.

ONE-SIDED CONCESSIONS

Sir, - With four high-ranking members of the Palestine Authority recommending that negotiations with Israel be halted because of settlement activity, we now see the duplicity and hypocrisy of our "peace partners."

The future of settlements is not part of the Declaration of Principles signed in Oslo 15 months ago. Yet Israel is being accused of contravening the spirit but not the letter of the agreement. The Arabs have violated and abrogated so many of the actual provisions of the DOP that they can hardly accuse Israel of abrogating the spirit of said agreement.

However, with past experience to guide them, the Arabs can be sure that concessions will come fast and furious.

FAY DICKER
Brooklyn, N.Y.

TO DIE AS JEWS

Sir, - Teddy Kollek, in his *Capital Talk* of January 13, describes a funeral which he attended in Kvit-zat Kinneret recently and a memorial service he attended there 30 days later. In his words, "A more Jewish, Israeli gathering I could not imagine."

What was Israeli about these ceremonies? Did they sing "Hatikva"? Did all present wave Israeli flags? Did they eat pita-felafel? No. "Some people spoke briefly about their friend and relative... some people cried, some people grieved silently... some of his letters were read out loud, and some of his favorite songs were sung." But there is nothing uniquely Israeli about that! They do these things at funerals all over the world.

No, the only thing about this funeral which you won't find anywhere else in the world is that a Jew was buried with "no religious ceremony."

Nevertheless, to refer to such a gathering as "Israeli" is an insult to most Israelis. Although a large proportion of Israelis do not wish to live as Jews (in no small part due to an educational system, encouraged by Mr. Kollek, which denied a generation a substantive knowledge of their heritage and religion), the vast majority of Israelis still wish to die as Jews and be buried as such.

J.D. HOOL
Jerusalem.

VENOMOUS AD

Sir, - The *Jerusalem Post* is the only daily in English and has, therefore, an obligation to accord a minimal respect to all its readers who, in some cases, have little choice but to subscribe to it.

Although the *Post* publishes articles expressing all shades of political opinion and, admittedly, is generally objective in its reporting, the editorials are not only biased, but are damaging to the psyche of its readers.

By accepting the historically ignorant, venomous, dishonest full-page advertisement about the foreign minister, the *Post* has put itself beyond the pale. The quotation from the diary of Moshe Sharett is given without any reference to the context, which had to do with frictions in Mapai.

Yes, I know all about freedom of expression and the money the paper earns from such an advertisement, but somewhere there must be a limit.

Unfortunately, Shimon Peres is too great a man and too engaged with bigger issues (as he always has been) to mobilize those members of the public who could collect funds that would fill the whole issue of the *Post* with disgusted rebuttals to this advertisement.

LUCY JACOBSON
Kfar Sava.

RAOUL WALLENBERG

Sir, - As the "world" remembers the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp, the Raoul Wallenberg Honorary Citizen Committee is announcing an international campaign to show gratitude to the great humanitarian hero Raoul Wallenberg, who is still considered alive today. A special Sefer Torah will be written in honor of Mr. Wallenberg.

A worldwide search is being conducted for individuals and their families who were saved by Mr. Wallenberg's rescue operation, in order to provide historical documentation of his mission. Also, a gathering is being planned in Israel to pay tribute to Raoul Wallenberg.

For more information and/or registration forms, please contact the undersigned at the Raoul Wallenberg Honorary Citizen Committee, Shai Agmon 221, 43380 Ra'anana, Tel 09-982889.

MAX GRUNBERG
Ra'anana.

Strange kind of morality

STEVEN PLAUT

FOR anyone still nursing the delusion that B'Tselem is a civil rights organization with no political agenda, a letter by the organization's director-general, published in several Hebrew newspapers recently, will come as a rude awakening. In the letter, Yizhar Be'er rebukes those who depicted the 1991 murder of schoolgirl Tirzah Porat as a crime perpetrated by Arabs. (The incident was recalled when another young girl, Ofra Felix, was murdered in the West Bank recently.)

Be'er argues that Arabs were neither morally nor legally responsible for Porat's death, and that any attempt to represent them as such is an outrageous distortion. Porat was killed by a Jew, Be'er says, and the cause of her death was the "provocation" of Arab villagers by Jewish settlers.

Porat was one of a group of schoolchildren hiking peacefully near the village of Beita in Samaria when they were suddenly stoned by the villagers. The group's guard fired at the attackers a number of times. Tragically, one bullet misfired, killing Porat.

Who was responsible for Porat's death?

According to B'Tselem, the answer is clear: the Jews. They caused her death, "provoking" the Arabs by walking near their village in the first place. And the misfired bullet came from the gun of a Jew. The Arab villagers were thus completely innocent.

THE MORAL underpinnings of Be'er's letter are fascinating.

B'Tselem has a novel yardstick for measuring innocence and guilt

When someone is killed in warfare or conflict, B'Tselem apparently believes that responsibility lies with whosoever misfires a weapon rather than with the initiators of the conflict.

For example, it was recently alleged that an Israeli man thought to have been killed by one of Saddam's Scuds may have been killed by a Patriot missile. If

we adopt B'Tselem's logic, Iraq cannot be held morally responsible for the death. The Americans must be the murderers.

In Operation Desert Storm, American jets accidentally killed some Allied soldiers. Saddam, according to B'Tselem's reasoning, bears no responsibility for that either. The Americans are to blame.

Had Allied planes bombed Auschwitz during World War II, the pilots would presumably have been murderers, while the Nazi guards would have remained innocent bystanders. An original moral philosophy, indeed.

It is outrageous to hold that, by walking near an Arab village, the schoolchildren provoked the locals' behavior.

Would B'Tselem have voiced a similar opinion had a group of

hiking Arab schoolchildren been stoned by Jews for the "provocation" of walking near Jewish homes? How about black children in the American South walking near some white homes? What could possibly have led the "humanists" of B'Tselem to such a warped conclusion?

The answer is that B'Tselem has never been an impartial or benign civil rights organization. It is a group that regards any Jewish presence in Palestine and, indeed, the Jewish state itself, as a "provocation" justifying Arab violence against Jews.

B'Tselem isn't interested in civil rights as such. For example, it refused to oppose the suspension of habeas corpus and due process for the Kahanist settlers arrested after the Goldstein atrocity in Hebron, something the American Civil Liberties Union would doubtless have done, faced with a similar challenge.

B'Tselem, it seems, has never met an Arab terrorist it doesn't wish to defend, has never heard an Arab allegation of Israeli misconduct that it doesn't accept at face value, and has never seen an Arab atrocity it cannot rationalize. It doesn't seem willing to grant the Jewish state any rights of self-preservation or self-defense.

Since much of B'Tselem's budget seems to be financed by naive well-wishers abroad, it is very important that the true nature of this organization be clarified.

The writer teaches business and economics at the University of Haifa.

School kids ride the information superhighway

An E-mail project gives youngsters a chance to meet, and learn about computers too, Laura Rosen Cohen reports

BEFORE Dganit Shamir joined the E-mail project at her school, she had no idea what could be done with computers besides playing games. Shamir learned about E-mail when her Ness Ziona school was partnered with the Harel Ephraim kibbutz school for a computerized research project. "We sent E-mail letters to the students there, and asked them what they would like to research. It turned out that we were all interested in subjects that affected teenagers," said Shamir, 15. "I decided that I wanted to deal with smoking," said Shamir. "After many letters to the students on the kibbutz, I found two research partners who were interested in the same thing. We talked a lot [electronically] until we came up with a specific topic."

They decided to compare attitudes in the city and on the kib-

butz towards smoking. Electronic mail has long been used in the university environment for research purposes. But for the past two years, the Winston Institute for the Study of Prejudice and Bar-Ilan University have been teaching Israeli school children how to use E-mail for high-level research projects. "In Israeli schools, there is a huge demand for programs that utilize electronic communication," says Nira Naf, a computer consultant at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan who specializes in pedagogic programming. "We show the children how to do research at several different levels. They first learn about the hardware of the computer and how it operates. Then, they start investigating software. Step by step, we show them academic research methods," said Naf.

According to Naf, the main idea of the program is to have students from very different

backgrounds cooperate on research projects. "We pair up schools, and the students find research partners solely using electronic communication." Dalia Eliraz, principal of the Golda Meir Middle School in Ness Ziona, says the E-mail program is also part of computer studies. Eliraz notes that computer studies are one of the subjects that hold the pupils' attention, no matter what background they come from.

Itai Berger, 14, has just started the program at Golda Meir. He says he knew only a little about computers before he started the project. "I didn't really know what a modem was, and I certainly didn't know about proper research methods before this," he said. "We started learning about the parts of the computer, and then used some games that taught us, step by step, different things we need to know about research."

"I came up with about four ideas before I narrowed down my topic. I decided that I wanted to explore the relationship between television and studying. We traded ideas with Kibbutz Yagur up north, and I found my partners," he said. The pupils are "very different from one another," said Naf. Northern schools have been paired with southern ones, and schools from affluent areas with schools from development towns,

she said. Esther Feinreich, coordinator at the Winston Institute, says it is no accident that the project falls under the auspices of the institute. "One of the things the children learn is to work with someone that they don't know. There is no chance for them to judge their partners by the clothes they wear, or what they look like. They overcome their stereotypes of certain groups of teenagers," she says.

Shamir, now in ninth grade, says she had certain ideas about kibbutz kids that proved totally wrong. "I thought they had so much freedom, that they had parties all the time, and that they all dressed in a 'loose' fashion," she recalls. "It turned out that they had a lot more supervision, loads of rules. They thought that we were the free ones, living in the city, doing whatever we wanted. The computer helped us reveal our similarities and differences."

"We got along so well, that we started talking to each other on the phone about regular teenage stuff, and not about computers. We became friends," she added. According to Naf, the demand for E-mail projects is growing, with over 200 Israeli schools currently involved in the project. "We have also had a similar success in programs between Israeli schools and public schools in the United States. We have done a few projects with schools in Arizona."

A high school in Tel Aviv did environmental research with the American students. That was even more of a challenge because all of their communication was in English," she said. Now, a plan is under way to extend the program to make E-mail an important part of Israeli-Diaspora relations. Naf will soon travel to Boston, Atlanta, New York and Chicago, to meet with the principals of Jewish day schools who are interested in creating a partnership with Israeli schools.

The new program is called "Enhancing Jewish Identity Between Israeli and Diaspora Schools Using Computers." Berger said he would ask his Diaspora counterparts what it feels like to live in a non-Jewish country, and what their culture is like.



Itai Berger, 14, of Golda Meir School in Ness Ziona, works on an E-mail project.

(Jeremy Feldman)

People who overload their workday may have 'hurry sickness'

SUZANNE CURLEY

In a rush? And still falling behind? You are not alone. Sixty-two percent of American workers in a recent survey said they frequently or always feel pressed to accomplish everything they have to do. The meltdowns were definitely in the minority: A mere 5% said they rarely or never feel rushed.

"Hurry sickness" is what Anne McGee-Cooper, a Texas-based time-management consultant, calls it.

Although epidemic, she says, there are antidotes - if the stress doesn't get to you first.

"Hurry sickness happens when your sole solution to time management is to try to get more things done in the same amount of time," says McGee-Cooper, author with Duane Trammell of *Time Management for Unmanageable People: The Guilt-Free Way to Organize, Energize and Maximize Your Life*.

Unchecked, hurry sickness can trigger various physical symptoms.

Shallow breathing, for one - which, since it impedes the flow of oxygenated blood to the brain, leads to fuzzy thinking and forgetfulness, making you fall even further behind.

But, obviously, the time-honored prescriptions put forward by time-management experts don't always effect a cure. Especially if you fall into what McGee-Cooper calls a divergent or "right-brain-thinker" category, or are someone who thinks about time in a flexible "polychronic" rather than a rigid, "monochronic" fashion.

"DON'T ASK about how I manage my time," says free-lance



There are antidotes to 'hurry sickness,' if the stress does not get to you first. One of them is time management.

writer Cindy Castleman, "but rather, ask me how much money I've wasted on time-management books."

Castleman is a typical example of the person who finds it difficult

to conform to old-style rules for systems and schedules: "I hate filing. I like putting things in piles out in the open, where I can see them."

"And," she says, "I can find

everything I need."

Back in the early 1970s when McGee-Cooper was going for a doctorate at Columbia University in "creative problem solving and the politics of change," she began to notice that a lot of people defied all time-management dogma - and were succeeding.

Many of them had messy desks, rarely finished one task before moving on and worked from multiple to-do lists.

"It began to occur to me," says McGee-Cooper, "that maybe the classic rules didn't work for everyone ... Left-brain people are 'convergent thinkers.' They like using unchanging logical systems based on abstract thinking and memory, repetition, conformity to standards. None of this comes easily to right-brain people."

But failure at managing time properly may not be merely a right-brain/left-brain issue. What author Dr. Scott calls "the secret pleasures of mismanaging time" are detailed in her classic 1980 book, *How to Put More Time in Your Life*. The psychology behind the incurable procrastinator, the chronic document misplacer or list-loser, the person who is always late - even to pleasurable outings - is more complex than most people realize. And tardiness often brings hidden benefits to the guilty party.

The satisfaction of defying authority or thumbing one's nose at the status quo, for example. "Some of us mismanage time to get attention or gain a sense of power," Scott writes. "Mismanaging time can also serve as a way to avoid unpleasant tasks or shirk personal responsibility. It can also be used to resist change, sidestep new feelings, avoid feeling close to others, and deal with the fear of feeling 'too good.'"

To-do lists are universal and have probably been around ever since Galileo discovered the pendulum in 16th-century Italy - and time was suddenly no longer one's own. Lists are the cornerstone of every time-management text ever written and form part of the decor - or clutter, depending on your viewpoint - of desks and kitchen tables and bathroom mirrors all over the world.

But time-management experts agree that lists must address more than chores. Loren Hulber, president of Day-Timers Inc., which makes calendars and datebooks, says, "Every individual needs to set down the beliefs and goals that are most meaningful to them."

"List what are professional

goals, what are your dreams for your family, your community, as well as personal development goals for expanding your life. Once you have those established, you can begin to set out your priorities."

At the New York City-based company Valenti, Smith and Associates, Angelo Valenti coaches professionals in time-management skills. "I always tell clients to look at the big picture, far into the future. If you start looking a year in advance, you identify goals and projects and can then work backwards," Gretchen Courage, director of a Montessori school in New York City, says her chiropractor - tired of her complaints about feeling stressed - pushed her to study time management.

She ended up training teachers at her school in what she had learned.

"We all have stereotypes about time and planning, depending on how we were raised, and our temperament," says Courage. "Some people take to this time-management stuff like ducks to water, others resist it and have some kind of stock in being disorganized."

Others fear losing their spontaneity. "There's a soap-opera style," she says, "where there's always a crisis. But," she concludes, "it's a form of self-abuse when you box yourself in because of deadlines, staying up all night to get ready for vacations or spending hours searching for one piece of paper." (Newsday)

Some telling tips for the time-pressured

HERE are some tips for better time management. • Use the "Swiss-cheese approach": Poking holes in daunting jobs reduces them to manageable size.

This is also known as the "elephant approach" - a whole elephant won't fit into a room, unless you dismember it - or "the salami technique" - slicing a huge task into mini-jobs, which can then be crossed off one at a time.

• Prioritize: Don't just work down your list in order, says Loren Hulber of Day-Timers. Put A, B or C next to each item. A means "must do"; B "should do," and C "could do."

• Look at the big picture and chart your progress: A simple visual exercise Angelo Valenti uses is a time line: On a big sheet of paper, list all the months of the year across the top; on the vertical axis, projects for that year. Use self-

adhesive notes for each step toward the goal, removing or repositioning them as needed.

• Make "down time" as important as "on time": Women, in particular, have trouble setting aside moments for themselves. (Women readers should try practicing the sentence "This is my time," until it comes easily.)

• Learn the art of letting go: "When a list becomes too overwhelming, it's time to take a good look at what you can realistically expect to accomplish," says Ronni Eisenberg and Kate Kelly in their book, *Organize Your Home*.

• Go high tech: New toys for the well-to-do time-management-impaired include computerized Personal Information Management Systems that break a day's schedule into 15- or 30-minute blocks; an alarm goes off when it's time to drop what you are doing and prepare for what's next on the agenda.

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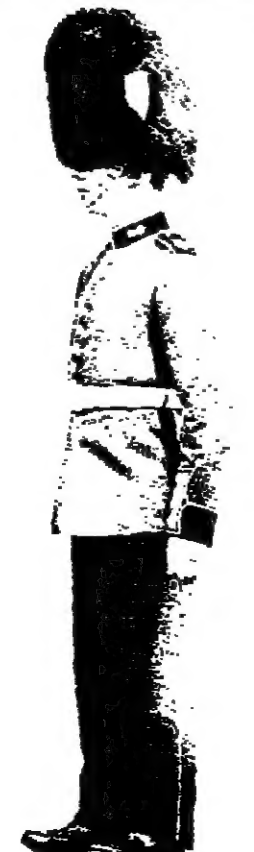
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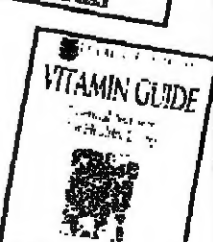
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Eisenberg buys control of Israel Chemicals for \$230m.

RACHEL NEIMAN

CONTROL of Israel Chemicals was sold yesterday to interests owned by businessman Shouli Eisenberg.

The Israel Corporation and a non-Israeli company controlled by Eisenberg will jointly buy a 24.9 percent of ICL's outstanding shares for \$230.3 million.

The Israel Corp. said completion of the deal is contingent on approval from Supervisor of Monopolies Yoram Turbovich and the Knesset Finance Committee.

Joshua Neeman, a spokesman for Eisenberg, said he "is looking to make the Israel Corp. a player in the international business arena."

Control of ICL will be handed over to Eisenberg in March. The Treasury said it will float an additional 22% of ICL in the US and Europe in one month.

The issue, originally scheduled for February but postponed, marks the first international government share issue carried out as part of the privatization process.

"It is our showpiece deal in the effort to sell state companies," said Finance Ministry spokesman Eli Yosef.

The Israel Corp. will be re-

sponsible for management of ICL, despite the government retaining the biggest stake, 28%.

ICL's average market value over the past year was some \$920m., and the concern itself is valued at \$1.1 billion. ICL's market value at the close of the deal was some \$908m. but was calculated based on a valuation of \$925m.

Shares in ICL rose 3% on the news but fell back slightly to close up 2% on the day. Israel Corp. shares closed 3% higher.

Eisenberg competed in the bidding for ICL against a consortium of US investors and businessman Ted Arison, who stayed in the race until the end. Koor also planned to bid but pulled out, saying it could not justify the price.

The decision to sell to the Israel Corp. came after a stormy and protracted negotiation process, during which ICL chairman Victor Medina resigned last month over a proposed move of ICL headquarters from Ramat Gan to Beersheba.

The issues at stake were a controversial Dead Sea Works concession law, exempting the company from certain environmental



Shouli Eisenberg: His company is looking to be a player in the international business arena. (David Rubinger)

ness sector, control over natural laws and a planning and buildings law, which would exempt ICL from certain corporate licensing requirements.

Both laws were passed in the Knesset on Monday night. ICL will be obligated under these laws, with certain exemptions for special circumstances due to its Sodom location.

Finance Minister Avraham Shohat said that while the management side of ICL was being handed over to the private busi-

ness resources were still in the hands of the government - through both the concession law and the government's retaining of its golden share.

Negotiations were also plagued by disputes over workers' rights, not all of which have been resolved.

ICL spokeswoman Ella Bar-Or said the company's Rotem plant was still on strike, which has essentially halted production at Dead Sea Pericase, but that all other ICL companies were functioning as usual.

Only workers at Dead Sea Works have signed a work agreement thus far, she said, but the company expected the matter to be resolved.

ICL will issue some 4% of shares to its workers as a bonus. The Treasury said ICL has already appointed a trustee to oversee the shares until they are handed over to workers following publication of the Israeli prospectus.

Dead Sea Works resumed its nine-month results yesterday, following the division between its business and the Dead Sea Bromine Works.

Net profits rose to NIS 100.3m. from NIS 71m. last year.

Sanbar plans to resign as Leumi head in June

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

the sale with Edmond Safra," Sanbar said. "It will be unpleasant to wait for the new owners to come in and ask me to leave. When my tenure ends, I've decided not to resubmit my candidacy."

A Bank Leumi spokesman emphasized that Sanbar's resigna-

BANK Leumi Chairman Moshe Sanbar plans to resign as chairman in June, when his tenure comes to an end.

Sanbar's decision to resign, which has not yet been officially submitted, is connected with the government's plans to sell the bank.

"The government intends to sell the bank, and is negotiating

tion is not related to the Africa Israel episode.

Sanbar resigned as Africa Israel chairman earlier this week due to the worsening in relations between him and Africa Israel general manager Shlomo Grotman.

Bank Leumi said Sanbar was not forced by the Leumi board to resign from Africa Israel but had done so voluntarily.

New directors chosen for TAAS-Israel Ind.

ALON PINKAS

DEFENSE Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Finance Minister Avraham Shohat have chosen eight new directors for the TAAS-Israel Industries board.

The new board of directors will replace the outgoing board of 13, headed by former chief of the general staff, Dan Shomron, who was fired by Rabin last week. The remaining five will be appointed shortly, according to a Treasury statement.

The new board is expected to hold its first meeting this week and is likely to recommend that Ya'acov Lifshitz, formerly Treasury director-general, head the new board.

The other seven directors are: Tova Pinto, the head of the Jewish Agency's budget department; Rachel Stuvitzki, Defense Ministry deputy legal adviser; Nechemiya Hasid, a marketing consultant who was formerly with the Defense Ministry; Ariel Ginzburg, former director-general of Bromine compounds; Shaul Gal, deputy head of the Defense Ministry's financial department; Uzi Levy, of the Defense Ministry budget department; and Eyal Lapidot, of the Finance Ministry's Accountant General Office.

Italian firm wants to buy Ram

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

ITALIAN steel magnate Andrea Pittini yesterday submitted a request to the Tel Aviv District Court to purchase Ram Industries for \$54 million, in partnership with the Intravex-Aranya group.

Pittini plans to acquire 51 percent of Ram, while Prof. Nissan Aranya and Intravex, an investment company from Switzerland, will buy the remaining shares. Aranya refused to specify his share in the consortium.

Industrial sources said Rabi Asa, Ram Industries' former owner, organized the consortium and plans to invest in the firm, although the request does not say he is part of the consortium.

Asa owned Ram until 1992, when it went into receivership.

Aranya, who represents Intravex here, denied Asa's partnership in the consortium. "Asa is not part of the group," he said. "As the former owner of Ram, he is interested in seeing the company sold as a going concern but nothing more."

Aranya said the entrance of a large European industrialist like Pittini, whose turnover is more than \$500 million annually, is expected to encourage more investment in Israel.

In the request, the consortium said it is ready to provide a \$54m. bank guarantee to purchase the steel conglomerate. The court is scheduled to decide this morning to either agree to Pittini's request or sell Ram's assets.

The applicants said a creditors arrangement, like the one they propose, is much more attractive to creditors than a normal sale, since the entire sum offered would be transferred to the creditors. In a normal sale offer, the final sum creditors receive is often uncertain because of tax expenses.

Ram's secured creditors include Maritime Bank Industrial Development Bank and PKO, a Polish bank. The amount owned by the secured creditors is estimated at between \$15m. and \$17m., while the unsecured creditors own some \$100m.

"The proposed creditors agreement has already received support from many of the creditors, including important Swiss banks which represent most of the creditors," Aranya said. "The sum of \$54m. offered as part of the agreement, is significantly higher than the \$36m. recently offered by Yehuda Welled in a tender to sell the company's assets."

Net profits at ECI Telecom jump

RACHEL NEIMAN

ECI Telecom yesterday reported a rise in fourth quarter net profits to \$20.3 million from \$17m. during the same period in 1993.

The results in 1993 are before accounting for a \$9.2m. charge for expenses relating to its merger with Telematics Inc. and provision for settlement of a stockholder lawsuit against Telematics.

The results were in line with expectations. The company's shares jumped 11 percent to

15.25 on the NASDAQ market in New York.

Revenues for the quarter rose to \$106.8 million from \$83.2m., while gross margins slipped to 52.9% from 55.2%.

For the full year, ECI's profits rose to \$76.7m. from \$52.7m.

Full year revenues rose to \$384.7m. from \$295.7m.

ECI president David Rubner said sales of the firm's Access

Network rose 88% to \$100m. and SDH product sales went up 53% to \$47.5m. DCME (Digital Circuit Multiplication Systems) sales rose 4% to \$128.3m.

Last year was the first year of operations following the merger between ECI and Telematics International.

"The combination of our network technologies and worldwide presence will be the driving force of our total network solution strategy," said Rubner.

Abeles: Banks' marketing of credit did not cause stock market collapse

EVELYN GORDON

THE banks' aggressive marketing of credit for the purchase of stocks could not have caused the stock market collapse last year, because the timing was wrong, Supervisor of Banks Ze'ev Abeles told the Knesset Finance Committee's capital markets subcommittee yesterday.

Furthermore, he said, focusing on this issue "diverts attention from dealing with the real problems of the capital market."

Abeles said the market began to rise frenetically in July 1993, and continued to do so until its collapse in February 1994.

In contrast, he said, the banks did not begin aggressive marketing of credit for stock purchases until the end of October, 1993, and this was halted at the beginning of January, 1994, on orders from the Bank of Israel.

Furthermore, Abeles said, the Bank of Israel's action on this issue was an example of supervision at its best.

"We identified the phenomenon within one-and-a-half to two months, and we stopped it within two," he said.

From the end of October 1993 until the end of December 1993, the credit granted for the purchase of stocks almost doubled, from NIS 1.7 billion to NIS 3.2b., Abeles said. Now, he said, it is about NIS 1b.

Subcommittee chairman Dan Tichon (Likud), however, questioned Abeles' assertion that the central bank handled the matter



Abeles: Focusing on this diverts attention from the market's real problems. (Tal Or)

properly. By ordering the banks to stop granting credit so abruptly, the central bank contributed to the collapse, he charged.

Abeles said he did not tell the banks to refuse to give credit if a client asked for it; he only ordered them to stop their aggressive marketing campaign.

But Bank Leumi representative Ilana Tamir disputed this. "He gave us an unequivocal order: No more loans for [investments in] mutual funds," she said.

Both Tamir and Avi Harel of Bank Hapoalim supported Abeles' assertion that credit for stock purchases was not responsible for the market's collapse.

At its peak, Harel said, the amount of credit granted for the purchase of stocks was about 2%

of the market's total value, which is one of the lowest ratios in the world. In the US, he said, stocks are often bought on 50% margin.

"Credit of this magnitude did not cause the collapse of the bourse," he said. "The decline in February 1994 stemmed from one, and only one, cause... the decline in corporate profitability."

In most cases, Harel said, the banks gave customers less credit than they asked for. Tamir added that the banks usually told customers to invest only a small portion of their portfolio in stocks.

However, both they and Abeles admitted there were instances in which bank clerks violated the guidelines, and these cases are being investigated, all three stressed.

Abeles also denied the banks conditioned other services on the taking out of loans for investment in stocks.

Tichon and Shmuel Avital (Likud) said they have received hundreds of complaints from people claiming this was done, and representatives of the Victims of Banking Association, who addressed the committee later in the day, seconded this.

Abeles said he will investigate any complaints he receives. He said a Bank of Israel team is currently auditing Bank Hapoalim's branch in Arad, where there have been numerous complaints about the aggressive marketing of credit.

One client of the bank committed suicide, apparently after losing heavily in the stock market.

Hapoalim's probe nears end

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

BANK Hapoalim's control committee is expected to complete its investigation of irregular activities at American Israel Bank by the end of the week.

A source close to the bank said the central bank is watching the situation carefully and may take action if its feels Bank Hapoalim responds inadequately.

During the last few weeks Bank Hapoalim's internal control committee has uncovered a series of irregularities at its subsidiary, including embezzlement and the granting of credit without receiving adequate security.

The committee then opened an investigation into the activities and those suspected of being responsible, including managing director Moshe Tsafir and other senior officials.

Net new investment in assets abroad falls by \$431 million

NEIL COHEN

NET new investment in real and financial assets abroad by Israelis dropped to \$178 million last year from \$609m. in 1993 and \$1.28 billion in 1992, according to figures published by the Bank of Israel yesterday.

The fall resulted mainly from Israelis continuing to liquidate their holdings of financial assets abroad, a trend which began in 1993 when they unloaded assets worth \$185m.

Last year they sold financial assets abroad worth \$547m.

At the same time, there was a fall in investment abroad to \$725m. after several years of continuous increases. Investment abroad was \$794m. in 1993.

The central bank said the increased selling of foreign assets was due to redemptions from mutual funds, which led to their selling foreign securities.

The weakness of the dollar, particularly against the shekel, and the sizeable interest rate differential between the two currencies also led to the conversion of dollar-denominated assets into linked and unlinked shekel deposits.

The value of traded foreign securities held by Israelis decreased 48% to \$1.6b. from \$3.1b. in 1993.

The fall resulted largely from a sharp drop in share prices, particularly of Israeli stocks traded in the US, which constitute a large part of the foreign securities held by Israelis.

The number of Israeli companies with investments abroad rose to 972 from 717.

Real estate companies were particularly active, investing \$110m. abroad, compared with just \$37m. in 1993.

Gingrich says wife's new position with FEPZ clear of any appearance of impropriety

WASHINGTON - A defensive House Speaker Newt Gingrich vigorously denied yesterday any ethical problem in his wife working for a company to help recruit businesses for the Free Export Processing Zone in Israel.

But the Republican leader con-

ceded during a news conference that there could be perceptions of an appearance of some ethical conflict.

Marianne Gingrich was hired in September by the Israel Export Development Co., a Jerusalem-based company owned by American businessmen, it was reported over the weekend.

The company, made up of such business owners as CBS president Laurence Tisch and clothing magnate Sy Syms, has been promoting the idea of a free-trade zone to the Israeli government for the past two years and has lobbied members of Congress, including Gingrich, to build support.

The company is seeking the Israeli government's approval to run the zone.

"I am confident that somebody will find an appearance problem in everything that my wife or I do

the rest of our lives," Gingrich said. "So if it's an appearance question, the answer is of course. There's an appearance problem literally with everything I do."

A spokesman said that, as vice president for business development, Marianne Gingrich is being paid a base salary of \$2,500 a month, plus commissions for any businesses she recruits for the trade zone.

The job could raise the question of whether Gingrich, who has no prior experience in trade development, was being used to help the company gain the favor of the Israeli government.

In his powerful role of House speaker, Gingrich has influence over legislation that could affect trade development.

The spokesman insisted that Marianne Gingrich's job was clear of "any appearance of impropriety" because the work did

not involve the US government.

"I think she's gone to the other side of the planet to avoid any connection with business in Washington," the spokesman said. "She couldn't go any further without coming back."

Before Gingrich was hired by IEDC, her husband promoted the free-trade zone idea to top Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the Wall Street Journal reported Monday.

Representatives of IEDC - including Vin Weber, a former congressman and close Gingrich ally who was on IEDC's payroll as a consultant until six months ago - lobbied Gingrich about the free-trade zone concept, IEDC controller Laurence Wald said.

Wald said his company lobbied a number of members of Congress, including Gingrich, to try to build US support for the concept. (Baltimore Sun)

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Pound sterling (£100,000)	6.125	6.500	6.125	
German mark (DM 200,000)	4.000	4.250	4.500	
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	2.875	3.125	3.575	
Yen (10 million yen)	0.885	0.750	0.475	
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German mark	2.9900	3.0300	2.94	3.2514
Pound sterling	1.8200	1.8600	1.82	1.8600
French franc	4.6700	4.7200	4.67	4.7200
Japanese yen (100)	0.0000	0.0000	0.00	0.0000
Dutch guilder	0.0000	0.0000	0.00	0.0000
Swiss franc	2.2100	2.2400	2.21	2.2400
Swedish krona	0.4000	0.4000	0.40	0.4000
Norwegian krona	0.4400	0.4400	0.44	0.4400
Danish krone	0.4600	0.4600	0.46	0.4600
Finland mark	0.6300	0.6300	0.63	0.6300
Canadian dollar	2.2800	2.2800	2.28	2.2800
Australian dollar	2.1400	2.1700	2.14	2.1700
S. African rand	0.8400	0.8400	0.84	0.8400
Belgian franc (10)	0.9500	0.9500	0.95	0.9500
Austrian schilling (10)	7.7000	7.7000	7.70	7.7000
Italian lire (1000)	1.8500	1.8500	1.85	1.8500
Japanese yen (100)	0.0000	0.0000	0.00	0.0000
Spanish peseta (100)	2.2500	2.2500	2.25	2.2500
* These rates vary according to bank. ** Bank of Israel.				
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI				

Key Representative Rates

US dollar	NIS 3.0220	+0.03%
Sterling	NIS 4.7128	-0.01%
Mark	NIS 1.9739	-0.14%

NEW STOCK MARKETS

New York market indexes

Index	Last	Change
DJ Industrials	5088.50	+10.77
DJ 30	1000.00	+0.00
NYSE Index	1000.00	+0.00
NYSE Transp.	1000.00	+0.00
NYSE Comp.	1000.00	+0.00
S&P 500	1000.00	+0.00
S&P 400	1000.00	+0.00
AMEX	1000.00	+0.00

Other stock market indexes

Index	Last	Change
FTSE 100	3072.7	+10.7
Shanghai	1000.00	+0.00
Hong Kong	1000.00	+0.00
Nikkei	1000.00	+0.00

Israeli stocks in NY

Symbol	Last	Change
Amir	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Leumi	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Hapoalim	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Mizrahi	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Leumi	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Hapoalim	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Mizrahi	1000.00	+0.00

LIBOR RATES

Rate	Last	Change
3 months	5.50%	+0.00%
6 months	5.75%	+0.00%
9 months	6.00%	+0.00%
12 months	6.25%	+0.00%

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Commodity	Last	Change
Crude oil	25.00	+0.00
Gold	375.00	+0.00
Silver	10.00	+0.00

Spot market metals (US)

Metal	Last	Change
Copper	1.50	+0.00
Aluminum	0.50	+0.00
Zinc	0.20	+0.00

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET

Multi-sided trading

Company	Price	Change
Amir	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Leumi	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Hapoalim	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Mizrahi	1000.00	+0.00

Two-sided trading

Company	Price	Change
Amir	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Leumi	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Hapoalim	1000.00	+0.00
Bank Mizrahi	1000.00	+0.00

Market settles into pre-tax routine

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET

ANDRE LUMBROSO

Two-Sided index: 164.69 -1.05%
Maof index: 163.69 -1.00%
Karam index: 139.06 -1.21%

THERE was little happening on the stock market floor yesterday which has not been going on for months, a long time before the capital gains tax was repealed.

The Two-Sided index declined 1.1 percent, the Maof 1% and the Karam 1.2%.

Turnover was NIS 81.3 billion, to which the Karam market (parallel list included) contributed NIS 20.8m.

The stock market is turning into a market of compulsive sellers and occasional buyers. The Karam and Meretz markets are characterized by a total disproportion between the two, in most cases on the sell side.

The Meretz has NIS 42m. in sell orders for only NIS 2m. in buy orders.

The disproportion between the two indicates an absence of buyers. The considerable surplus of sell orders allows the few buyers that are there to pick whatever interests them after the appropriate price declines.

Basically the same picture prevails on the Two-Sided market, except that it takes place in a less concentrated manner.

The market has clearly returned to its pre-tax routine and is waiting for developments.

The financial statements coming out these days are generally atypical and unrepresentative. One must wait a few weeks to see a trend develop. The consensus is that the bottom line is likely to show declines.

The NASDAQ index in New York has voted no confidence in Israeli securities. The most noticeable decline was Tadiran, which fell 11% and Elbit by 8%. These declines were echoed in Tel Aviv, as Tadiran declined 7.8% and Elbit 1.8%.

Elsewhere on the Two-Sided market, the outlook was bleak.

The declines outnumbered the rises by a ratio of 5 to 1. Teva declined 1.8%, Koor 3.5%, and Clal Israel and Clal Electronics 1.5%.

Israel Chemicals rose 2%, as the news that the Eisenberg group was buying a controlling stake in the company had its impact. Piryon, part of the Eisenberg group, rose 6%. Dead Sea Works declined, as investors apparently realized the rises on Monday were unjustified.

Among more speculative issues, T-Bone Veal rose 2.3%, Mashov fell 5.9%, Kardan 5%, and Hanel 9.8%.

The bond market declined 2%, as investors are expecting a low rise in the CPI for January.

FTSE closes firmer on inflation outlook

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuters) - Shares closed firmer in a broad move, helped by a more bullish British inflation outlook, but news of an Office of Fair Trading probe into brewers' wholesale beer prices and a soft Dow helped take the edge off the earlier blue chip rise.

The FTSE index closed 10.7 points up at 3,072.7.

FRANKFURT - German shares ended the floor trade steady, lacking orders to pierce key resistance at the 2,100 level.

But traders say the level will soon be tested. More funds were seen being shifted from commodities into bonds and equities. The 30-share DAX index closed up 2.80 points at 2,092.49.

PARIS - French shares closed slightly lower on profit-taking after a good run from the start of the week on the growing conviction that US interest rates have peaked. The CAC-40 index closed down 1.67 at 1,870.44.

ZURICH - Swiss shares closed slightly higher after a day dominated by investors swapping cyclical stocks for banks and insurers.

Dealers said Wall Street reaction later yesterday to the US Treasury auction would determine today's Swiss market.

The broad SPI closed up 2.41 points at 1,713.47.

TOKYO - Tokyo stocks closed lower on sporadic selling after lackluster trading. Individual investors, who played a major role in the recent rally, shied away from trading because of the weakness of many construction-related shares.

The key Nikkei average closed down 166.68 points, or 0.89 percent, at 18,500.55.

HONG KONG - Shares ended the day off their highs as profit-takers muscled in on gains of more than 500 points since the beginning of the week.

The Hang Seng index closed up 106.21 points, or 1.34%, at 8,004.01, after rising to an intra-day high of 8,146.81.

SYDNEY - The Australian share market closed near its lows for the day in active trading, dragged down by selling pressure in the resource sector due to the mixed outlook for commodity prices.

The All Ordinaries Index ended 17.2 points, or 0.92% lower, at 1,845.8 points.

JOHANNESBURG - South African shares continued their losses across the board in afternoon trading as bearish sentiment set in.

Local institutions had been the big sellers as they moved to reduce equity exposure in what had been a very nervous market. The overall index ended down 119.3 points to 5,213.4, with the industrial index 96.2 points down at 6,448.4 and gold index 65.8 points off at 1,536.2.

Blue-chip stocks end lower, snap five-day winning streak

WALL STREET REPORT

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Blue chip stocks ended with slight losses yesterday as profit-taking broke the market's five-session winning streak.

The Dow Jones industrial average closed 0.34 of a point lower at 3,937.39 based on early and unofficial data, as the blue chip index surrendered a fraction of its gain of more than 105 points over the last five trading sessions.

In the broader market, advancing stocks led declines 4-3 on heavy trading of more than 317 million shares.

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES

MARK	STERLING	YEN	SFR	FFr
MARK	2.9301/1	154.74/6	2.0240/2	8.2655/8
STERLING	1.5428/9	0.8456/4	1.3070/4	5.3377/1
YEN	117.89/12	0.8935/1	76.42/4	4.0807/1
SFR	0.2689/2	0.1209/1	18.70/5	0.2447/1
FFr	0.1209/1	0.1209/1	0.2447/1	0.1209/1

Ministry: Olmert cannot close roads

A SENIOR Transport Ministry official has informed Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert that the ministry has the final say on whether to close Rehov Bar-Ilan on Shabbat, and that it is completely against the move.

"As I informed you in my letter of 29.11.94, we will not agree to the closure of Rehov Bar-Ilan on Shabbat, holidays, or any other date," National Transport Supervisor Alex Langer wrote to Olmert.

Copies of the letter, dated January 3, were also sent to the city's haredi deputy mayors, Uri Lupoliansky and Meir Porush, who are demanding the road's closure.

The letter was in answer to a question by Olmert concerning authority to close Rehov Bar-Ilan. It indicates the committee appointed by Olmert last year to make recommendations on the closure has no

authority in the matter.

Olmert stands by his decision to appoint a committee to investigate the possibility of Shabbat road closings, despite the ministry's position, city spokesman Hagai Elias said.

Elias noted the committee was ordered to review not only the possible closure of Bar-Ilan but also other streets in religious neighborhoods that haredi leaders want closed. Olmert would only state his view on Bar-Ilan and the other streets, after the committee presented its recommendations, Elias said.

The Transport Ministry spokesman said that Langer's letter reflected the ministry's official position.

But Eliezer Sturm, chairman of the committee appointed by Olmert, said that the

BILL HUTMAN

ministry's position could be overruled.

"You don't believe that some clerk can have the final say on such a sensitive issue," Sturm said, adding that he had seen Langer's letter to Olmert.

In his letter, Langer reviewed the legal framework under which his office has the final say on the closure of Bar-Ilan. The letter was accompanied by a map showing which major roads, including Bar-Ilan, were under his authority.

There are smaller roads which the municipality can decide to close on its own, Langer said.

Sturm said the committee was continuing its work despite the Transport Ministry's position. He said he did not know when recommendations would be presented to the mayor.

It adds:

Rehovot Chief Rabbi Simha Hacohen Kook yesterday censored the municipality for deciding to allow restaurants and cafes to open on Shabbat.

The Rehovot City Council approved the move by a vote of 11 to 10 at a meeting late Monday night. It will allow the opening of entertainment spots only in industrial areas.

It also will allow a shopping mall being built near the new Egged station to open on Shabbat.

Secular and religious youth staged opposing protests outside City Hall during the meeting.

After the vote, Kook entered the meeting room and said: "I despise you." A shouting match then broke out between Kook and Rehovot Mayor Ya'acov Sandler, who accused Kook of "turning religion into politics."

Court to rule on collection of organization tax

EVELYN GORDON

THE organization tax cannot be collected from people who are not Histadrut members until the High Court of Justice has ruled on a petition against the tax, an interim injunction issued by the court ordered yesterday.

Justice Eliahu Mazza issued the injunction in response to a petition by the Likud-affiliated Histadrut Ha'ovdim Haleumit, which challenges a recent agreement between the Histadrut, the Treasury and many private-sector employers. According to this pact, employers will deduct 0.9% of Histadrut members' salaries as union dues, while those who are on collective wage agreements will pay the Histadrut 0.7% of their salaries. Those who are members of unions affiliated with the Histadrut, such as Leumi, will pay dues individually.

Although the 0.7% was accidentally collected from public employees who are Leumi members this month, the Treasury yesterday gave orders to Malama, its wage management company, to return the money.

The injunction also prevents Labor and Social Affairs Minister Ora Namir from extending the agreement to private-sector employers who did not sign it — something Namir has said she does not intend to do anyway. However, it does not prevent the collection of dues from Histadrut members, which Leumi had also requested.

Mazza ordered that the hear-

ing on the petition be held within 30 days.

The petition argues that the agreement impinges on workers' freedom of organization by blatantly discriminating in favor of one union: It provides funding for the Histadrut from members and non-members alike, but does not give similar collection services to other unions even from their members. The agreement also forbids its signatories to make such a deal with other unions without the Histadrut's consent.

The petition charged that the agreement was a "political conspiracy" between the Labor-led government and the Histadrut to ensure continued funding for the latter, now that it can no longer take money from Kupat Holim dues.

Furthermore, the petition argued, collecting union dues from non-members violates the property-protection clause of the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedom. For this reason, attorney-general Michael Ben-Yair said it would be illegal for Namir to extend the agreement to all companies.

While Ben-Yair's ruling did not discuss the legality of taxing non-union members when their employers have signed the agreement, employer consent should not make a difference when the money is coming from the employee, the petition said.

Ben-Menahem breaks down before House Committee

LIAT COLLINS

DEPUTY Housing Minister Eli Ben-Menahem (Labor) broke down in tears yesterday during discussions by the Knesset House Committee on lifting his immunity to stand trial for allegedly attacking two teenage girls during the 1992 election campaign.

"I've been set up. I was attacked and now I found myself guilty," he told a special committee session with Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair.

While Ben-Yair read out the charges, Ben-Menahem, clearly upset, shook his head and mumbled, "It isn't true. These are lies."

Ben-Yair said that, on election day 1992, Ben-Menahem had gone to his local polling station in Kfar Shalem to vote. There he found several Likud activists distributing fliers and stickers, despite the law banning canvassing at polling places.

An argument broke out between the activists and Ben-Menahem, during which he allegedly pushed one girl, apparently trying to break out from the crowd surrounding him. She fell on a fence and hurt several fingers.

Ben-Menahem is also charged with shoving another girl and pulling her hair. The second girl sustained a neck injury when she fell backwards during the melee.

The attorney-general said



Deputy Housing Minister Eli Ben-Menahem composes himself yesterday at the House Committee hearing. (Isaac Harari)

neither side was innocent. "If Ben-Menahem were not an MK, there would be no reservations about filing charges," he said.

Ben-Yair refused requests by several MKs to hear new witnesses, saying this is the function of the court, not the House Committee.

Ben-Menahem told the committee that two policemen who had given statements had arrived on the scene after the incident and were not

eyewitnesses. But the attorney-general said, "The evidence against Ben-Menahem is solid." The committee will continue its deliberations on the subject.

Agriculture Ministry destroying surplus produce to bolster prices

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

LESS than three months after fruit and vegetable prices soared to unprecedented heights, the Agriculture Ministry and the Vegetable Board have started to destroy produce, for fear that prices will drop in the coming months as a result of an oversupply.

This week, the ministry destroyed three million tomato plants in the Beit She'an Valley while last week, cauliflower was destroyed after its wholesale price fell to NIS 1 per kilo.

Vegetable Board managing director Efraim Shalom predicted an oversupply of

onions and carrots.

Chief Rabbi Yisrael Lau called on the ministry and the growers to find a way to prevent the destruction of produce, and asked that a way be found to get the produce to poor people or institutions, whose budgets make it difficult for them to buy vegetables at any price.

Agriculture Minister Ya'acov Tsur said "the government has come to a number of conclusions, based on last year's developments in the vegetable sector. The ministry will not let prices drop to a level whereby farmers ability to continue to work is harmed."

It is contributed to this report.

Shas names preferred 'caretaker' ministers for portfolios it covets

SARAH HONG

But forces within Labor are pushing to have new people brought into the cabinet, with former chief of staff Ehud Barak, Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, Histadrut Chairman Haim Ramon, and MK Rafi Ederi cited as possible candidates.

Sources close to Rabin note that it would probably be in Rabin's own best interest to accept the demands of both Meretz and Shas, and reassign the portfolios to current ministers.

Alienating Shas might make it impossible to ever take them back into the government and expand its coalition, while trying to implement a major cabinet shake-up would threaten the coalition's internal peace.

But many in Labor see Shas's decision not to rejoin the government as an opportunity for many hopefuls to realize their ministerial aspirations. Faction members are demanding the Shas portfolios not go to caretakers, but be permanently reassigned, with the stipulation that no minister hold more than a single portfolio.

To do this, Rabin would have to expand his government. The contenders for the Interior portfolio — Moshe Shahal and Kessar of Labor and Yossi Sarid of Mer-

etz — would have to yield one of their portfolios in return for Interior. The same would apply to either Shetreet and Uzi Baram, who both want Religious Affairs.

Labor sources say that Barak, who has just begun a seven-month study program in the US, would be happy with either the Interior or the Police portfolios, having concluded that Rabin is not about to let go of the Defense portfolio.

Sources close to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Beilin is sure to be appointed a minister soon, as Rabin, they claim, made Peres a promise to that effect.

Ramon is not likely to return to the government in the near future, the sources said, and Ederi does not have any other support.

The sources said Beilin might be paired with either Ederi or Barak and brought into the cabinet. Thus, Rabin would balance a new pro-Peres minister with one closer to him.

However, Shas insists no move be made without its consent or until party leader Aryeh Deri returns from abroad next week.

Shas wants to make sure none of its appointees in the Interior or Religious Affairs ministries is dismissed and that the new ministers do not do anything to hurt Shas's funding and other interests.

Winning cards and numbers

In yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance card draw, the lucky cards were the nine of spades, nine of hearts, ace of diamonds, and eight of clubs.

In yesterday's daily Lotto draw, the winning numbers were 1, 3, 4, 17, 29, and 31. The additional number was 18.

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Residents to be allowed to move into Shuafat Ridge homes

BILL HUTMAN

FAMILIES will be allowed to move into the new Jerusalem neighborhood of Shuafat Ridge, despite the lack of schools, synagogues, and other public institutions there.

The city's building and planning committee on Monday passed an emergency measure allowing the population of the neighborhood, earmarked for religious families. The committee also gave the go-ahead for mobile homes to be used to temporarily house the institutions.

"We had no choice," deputy mayor and committee chairman Uri Lupoliansky said. Lupoliansky said he and other haredi councilors were under heavy pressure from constituents to let families move into the new units.

The building code prohibits the population of new neighborhoods until public institutions are built. Tuesday's decision was aimed at circumventing the building code.

Some 2,100 units are being built at Shuafat Ridge, in north Jerusalem, with a several hundred homes to be completed in the next two to three months.

Lupoliansky charged that the Education Ministry had not provided the funding necessary for the kindergartens and schools to be built on time. A ministry spokeswoman strongly denied the allegations.

Meretz MK says party will ask to halt plans for Har Homa

BILL HUTMAN

MERETZ will demand that the government halt new Jewish housing development throughout eastern Jerusalem, including at Har Homa, Meretz Deputy Agriculture Minister Walid Sadek said yesterday.

"Har Homa is a mine in the path of the peace process," Sadek said, during a visit with Peace Now activists to the Arab village, Umm Tubba, bordering the proposed Har Homa housing site in southern Jerusalem.

"The whole process will blow up if we allow a Jewish neighborhood to be built at Har Homa," Sadek said that at the upcoming

ing cabinet meeting. Meretz would call for the government to halt development at Har Homa. Last week, the city planning committee gave the go-ahead for building a Jewish neighborhood there.

Only one other MK turned out for the visit, Anat Maor, from Meretz. Peace Now organizers, who also vowed to fight development of Har Homa, had no explanation for the low attendance.

"There should be no new Jewish development in east Jerusalem until negotiations on the city's future are completed," Maor said.

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